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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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MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE WORKSHOPS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION

*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 take note of the conclusions of the Council of Europe Meetings of the Workshops for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention organised in 2007-2008:

I. Conclusions of the sixth Council of Europe Meeting of the Workshops for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention on “*Landscape and rural heritage*”, Sibiu, Romania, 20-21 September 2007;

II. General conclusions (A) and closing presentation (B) of the seventh Meeting of the Workshops for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention on “*Landscape in planning policies and governance: towards integrated spatial management*”, Piestany, Slovak Republic, 24-25 April 2008.

I. CONCLUSIONS OF THE SIXTH COUNCIL OF EUROPE MEETING OF THE WORKSHOPS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION ON “LANDSCAPE AND RURAL HERITAGE”, SIBIU, ROMANIA, 20-21 SEPTEMBER 2007

Meeting organised by the Council of Europe, Cultural Heritage, Landscape and Spatial Planning Division, Directorate of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage, in association with the Ministry of Development, Public Works and Housing, the Ministry of Culture and Cults, the United Nations Development Programme (Romania), Sibiu Mayorality and Sibiu County Council. The sixth Meeting of the Council of Europe of the Workshops for the implementation of European Landscape Convention was on the Agenda of the Sibiu 2007 European Capital of Culture's Programme. Under the high patronage of the Romanian Presidency, this Programme was developed with the support of the Prime Minister and the European Commission. Special thanks to the partners and collaborators, who were also the Sibiu 2007 European Capital of Culture's Programme producers: Government Commissioner for Sibiu 2007 European Capital of Culture's Programme; Sibiu 2007 European Capital of Culture Association; Ministry of Culture and Cults of Romania; Sibiu County Council; Sibiu Mayorality.

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Mr Mauro AGNOLETTI
Expert of the Council of Europe

The sixth meeting, in Sibiu, of the Council of Europe Workshops for the Implementation of the European Landscape Convention discussed the rural landscape in a particularly interesting context. But our thanks, first of all, to the Romanian Government and the City of Sibiu for their hospitality on the occasion of this meeting, at which the participants were given the opportunity of two days' intensive discussion, with more than 100 speakers. The discussions took place at the Astra Museum, which contains outstanding examples of structures and machinery typical of rural Romania's wealthy cultural heritage. Two excursions enabled the participants to visit and admire the rural landscape in this part of Romania.

The rural landscape is an important issue for all 47 Council of Europe member States, especially the new 27 member EU in which territory classified as rural accounts for more than 90% of the total surface area, contains over 60% of the population and produces more than 50% of total wealth. Apart from this quantitative data, it should also be pointed out that it is in the rural areas that much of European civilisation developed. This is reflected today by the many ways in which human beings have shaped the natural landscape over the centuries, producing some of the most marked and most representative manifestations of the European continent's many different cultural identities. The numerous European landscapes are a reflection of the continent's different faces, and the growing concern for the landscape indicates the social, political and cultural tensions of an entity that is still seeking its own identity, an identity not directed against other identities but concerned to overcome its own uncertainties by accepting dialogue, inclusion and diversity.

The role of the landscape and our perception of it have, however, changed in the course of time. Today, the landscape is no longer esteemed only for its “aesthetic and cultural” dimension, an elitist concept divorced from the socio-economic context. The landscape is now part of the definition of a development model. The aim is to tackle environmental issues

by incorporating human society into a project not limited to simple “gardening” operations or to bureaucratic action that only involves systems of protection. The search for an identity and a sense of place, a search expressed by the demand for countryside, highlights a deeper malaise associated with the globalisation process, its standardising, modernising effects on the one hand and its imbalances and inequalities on the other. Tackling the landscape question in all its complexity involves a critique of established development models, without any concession to nostalgic yearnings for the pre-modern era or to unrealistic questings for an environment or landscape immune from human influence. The landscape is a largely cultural construct. It exists once conceived of or to some extent “planned” by human beings, with account taken of its natural components. The diversity of meanings associated with the landscape and the opportunities presented by a landscape-based approach for the European continent mark out the landscape as a possible new paradigm for our development model, with the aim of harmonious integration of social, economic and environmental factors in space and time.

Transformation of the rural landscape

The reports presented at the meeting showed the different values attaching to the rural landscape. However, they also detailed the various degradation processes facing the landscape, bringing out the need to pinpoint, locate and inventory the characteristics of transformation in order to identify what is required in the way of management and development. Despite the wealth of documentation in recent years on sustainable development (especially with regard to the landscape), rural and environmental policies have been unable to prevent degradation processes that have often led to standardisation of the landscape. At the same time, law enforcement and supervision have been hampered by a lack of proper indicators and criteria for assessing the rural landscape and by the speed of the changes which socio-economic development has brought in recent years, increasingly altering the structural characteristics that affect the mechanisms for change.

As many reports show, the main consequence of these processes is the reduced quality of the rural landscape, a trend that can be seen today over a large part of Europe from Scandinavia to the Mediterranean. The principal reason for this is the abandonment of land as a result of various demographic processes, with movement of the rural population to the towns and consequent neglect of traditional landscapes, these being less suited to development of industrial-scale farming. This process has also been aided by Community agricultural policies which, in order to reduce surpluses of farm produce, have promoted set-aside programmes and encouraged the gradual abandon of traditional farming systems, which are less important from the economic and productive point of view but crucial as far as the landscape is concerned. In Eastern Europe, the phenomenon was assisted by pre-1989 agricultural models, as the Romanian representatives reminded us at the meeting. The changes to the rural landscape that have taken place can be seen in all landscape types – agricultural, forest or pastoral – and also affect the built heritage.

The agricultural systems introduced have moved in opposite directions. In the areas most conducive to the cultivation models with the technical resources for industrial-scale farming, areas lending themselves to intensified and simplified production, we have witnessed the development of (mostly but not always) economically efficient agrosystems adapted to the globalised market and based on outside energy resources. This approach has proved fragile from the ecological point of view and is often environmentally harmful. On the other hand, in areas not conducive to simplified crop growing and intensified production, a marginalisation process has long been under way and has resulted in the abandon of rural settlements and activity. In practice, the typical polyculture systems of traditional agriculture

are disappearing, especially in Southern Europe, as they are not supported by policies that counter the monoculture approach. The connection between farming and the use of animals has been broken in monoculture systems: animals no longer have any function (eg as working animals, for the recycling of crop residues, for the production of organic fertiliser, etc.) and are no longer to be found in the type of agriculture made up of autonomous production units, with the further result of a decline in landscape diversity. Emphasis on increased productivity has thus impoverished the landscape without providing a model that actually has any advantages compared with the many existing types of agriculture in Europe. Arguably, European agriculture has imported cropping systems typical of other parts of the world, such as the monoculture landscapes of North American cereal farming, without turning the identifying characteristics of European landscapes into competitive assets.

Few reports looked at forest landscape. European forests have been profoundly influenced by human activity, which has changed their characteristics in terms of their density, structure and specific composition – with the result that forests are often mistakenly referred to as “natural” areas. In terms of surface area, we are seeing an increase in woodland in all the areas abandoned by farming and sheep-rearing. The rate of forest advance is 400,000 hectares a year in Europe. However, in some countries such as Italy, the size of the forested area has tripled over the last 100 years, a phenomenon that puts the effects of global warming into perspective. In many areas, the forests are characterised by large expanses of coniferous monoculture that replaced broad-leaved trees as a result of the approaches promoted by the forestry sciences at the beginning of the 19th Century. So what we are seeing today is a reduction in the once wide variety of traditional forest management systems (such as woodland adapted to cattle grazing and to fruit production for human consumption), a decline of wooded meadows, of shrubland, of woods for the production of forage branches, of coppicing, of resin harvesting, and of many other woodland systems closely connected with farming activities. At the same time, reforestation programmes are generally distinguished by their visually unattractive planting patterns and the use of species that do not form part of the local landscape. Finally, funding for reforestation unfortunately makes no allowance for integrating new woodland into the landscape.

The renaturalisation processes currently under way in many wooded and non-wooded areas have both positive and negative aspects following the disappearance of open spaces and the creation of compact, homogeneous, less diverse land cover which is not only detrimental to the landscape but also to biodiversity in general and to specific aspects of it. Unfortunately, like the Forest Action Plan drawn up by the European Commission, the existing indicators and criteria for sustainable forest management pay little attention to the landscape and to cultural values. The Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (www.mcpfe.org) recently encouraged the production of a guide for implementation of Vienna Resolution No. 3 (2003) on the social and cultural dimensions of sustainable forest management as no such guide had been produced. The guide, which was officially presented in September 2007, advocates a division of present indicators and promotes national policy strategies and programmes that could lead to policy agreement between the 40 MCPFE member countries, something of huge relevance to the European Landscape Convention.

In many countries, neglect, changes in the rural economy, and woodland spread have brought about a big reduction in both wooded and unwooded grazing. Moreover, because of the falling numbers of free-grazing cattle and the gradual development of shed-rearing, there are far fewer herdsmen. Phenomena such as seasonal migration of livestock to grazing grounds (transhumance) are also much less common. Wooded grazing land once had many different functions, such as providing grazing cattle in the countries of Southern Europe with

cooler ground for the summer months. In addition, this pastureland was often part of a production cycle that also involved the growing of crops such as cereals and helped maintain considerable landscape diversity and biodiversity of herbaceous species. Although wooded grazing land is still an important factor in countries like Spain, where it is used for the production of quality pork, it is generally being encroached upon by woodland or replanted for the production of timber. Its conservation should be strongly encouraged along with biodiversity-conserving activities in connection with habitat for numerous plant and animal species.

Quite a number of the reports dealt with rehabilitation and promotion of the built heritage. In addition to decay caused by extensive urban spread into agricultural areas, there is the problem of rehabilitating and conserving various types of buildings typical of rural manufacturing and settlements. Key factors here are the rediscovery of rural areas by non-residents and restoration work by public authorities. This raises the question of the landscape's importance not only to rural communities but also to urban ones, with export into the countryside of tangible and intangible values that form part of urban living and have the potential to exert a powerful influence on rural areas. In some cases, this creates tension between urban perceptions of the countryside and the "reality" as experienced by rural populations.

Development and enhancement of the rural landscape

Some reports went into various possible solutions to landscape conservation and enhancement as important aspects of economic development of rural areas, of quality of rural environment, and of quality of life.

From the economic point of view, rural areas can and must take advantage of "landscape as a resource", a developmental and competitive asset which Europe's competitors, lacking Europe's variety of landscape, cannot replicate. In addition to the promotion of typical traditional products, this takes in the whole range of products and services associated with rural areas such as the rural tourism and recreational activities, which have grown considerably in the United States and Europe in parallel with the decrease of employment in traditional farming. Landscape-related services, which encompass everything to do with planning, implementation, logistics and management, are necessary to maintain occupations and develop new ones. However, a closer interconnection of landscapes, goods and services requires greater sensitivity on the part of administrators, the public and producers capable of influencing the market, with greater synergy of all concerned. This can be achieved through a range of measures aimed at promoting conservation of landscape resources and by paying closer attention to the connection between product quality and landscape quality and to the development of integrated approaches. Various processes need initiating to guarantee both income for workers in services that benefit the landscape and economic advantage for those entrepreneurs who move away from produce, cropping systems and conduct incompatible with the promotion of landscape as a resource. The aim is to develop economic activities which, by their nature, enhance the landscape, reduce passive conservation, apply a variety of agricultural systems according to urban development and rural infrastructure, and recognise that the "productivist" model does not promote rural areas effectively.

As regards the quality of the rural environment, it is clear that the long-standing relationship between human beings and the natural world in Europe has given landscapes considerable biological diversity, ecological functionality and visual attractiveness to match the cultural diversity that typifies the continent of Europe. The Convention should treat such variety as a strength, not a weakness. The conservation and/or rehabilitation of the landscapes concerned

should seek to improve their overall quality by countering the adverse effects of certain production systems and rural exodus and by replacing inappropriate forestry and nature-conservation policies. Improvement of the rural setting should give priority to rehabilitating and maintaining the biodiversity of the landscape. However, it should not be confused with other objectives such as nature conservation, except when these objectives actually converge. It is important that action on behalf of the landscape should take account of local contexts. Measures that might have a positive impact in some landscape contexts could prove counterproductive in others. More generally, and parallel to environmental action, agricultural policies should develop specifically landscape measures and lay down precautionary measures for activities which seek to improve the environment but have not been assessed in landscape terms. The expansion of biomass production is a case in point, for here we have a development that is rapidly transforming the European landscape without any attention being paid to its impact on landscape.

The landscape is a key criterion for assessing the quality of rural life. In fact, the whole aim could be said to be landscape quality for quality of life. Projects and measures to develop and maintain landscape resources provide significant benefits given the preference for peri-urban or rural areas as permanent or temporary places of residence. The reasons for the preference for rural areas normally extend beyond mere concern for quality of individual components of the environment such as air, water or soil. The preference is influenced by overall values with a link to landscape, although these tend to be expressed in terms of “nature” or “environment”. In some parts of Europe, local people still clearly identify certain features of the landscape as bound up with local identity. Over time, local identity and its various distinguishing features have become associated with specific characteristics of the landscape. Restoration and maintenance of such identity-shaping landscape characteristics depends on the quality of initiatives by public and private players to facilitate life in rural areas, combat their abandon and encourage continued human activity. Such action, which can meet people’s recreational, emotional and spiritual needs, should not be limited to the maintenance of historical landscapes with their unique characteristics. Rather, the aim should be to maintain the whole range of functions which landscape performs today.

Future challenges

The possibilities so far suggested of applying the Convention to rural landscape require the co-ordination of national and local agricultural policies, and this cannot be done without the establishment of a cultural basis common to local public- and private-sector operators and the general public. From the operational point of view, the path to follow could be to make use of the rural development policies that many countries Parties to the Convention routinely have to implement as members of the European Union, with considerable economic resources at their disposal, while non-EU member countries could use national rural policy. From the EU standpoint, greater attention to landscape also seems fundamentally important in order to respond to growing criticism of the large financial commitment – equivalent to 42% of the European budget – to this sector, which, incidentally, is benefiting from the current reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Measures would be geared to general strategies and to action at local level, with the development of incentives, including tax relief, and the establishment of appropriate standards in the three above-mentioned sectors. The aim would be to align them to the objectives of the Convention, which do not find direct expression in the CAP. Such a strategy could be appropriately supported by the network of local offices and institutions for implementing the Convention.

Despite the opinion expressed by some speakers, the interconnecting financial measures in the three main areas of European rural development policy do not pay enough attention to this. The landscape is not mentioned in axis 1 (“Improving the competitiveness of the agriculture and forestry sector”) or in axis 2 (“Improving the environment and the countryside”), although it is explicitly mentioned in axis 3 (“Improving the quality of life in rural areas”). Article 57(b) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1698/2005 of 20 September 2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development refers to “studies and investments associated with maintenance, restoration and upgrading of the cultural heritage such as the cultural features of villages and the rural landscape”. Nevertheless, as the inclusion of the landscape in the five priority objectives of the Italian Rural Development Plan for 2007-2013 shows, it is possible to adapt certain existing measures to the landscape. This can already be done in any way they wish by all countries that have ratified the Convention, even though the lack of explicit landscape protection measures is a distinct disadvantage.

In my final comments, I turn to the Romanian experience. What prospects does the Convention offer the Romanian development process? Can landscape conservation be presented as an alternative to letting things remain as they are and preserving the historical rural landscapes, or is it necessary to develop the economy and thus destroy such landscapes, which is what the experience of most industrial countries suggests would happen? This question, which was also asked by the representatives of the Romanian Government, cannot remain unanswered as it is linked to the future of the Convention and the volte-face that has long been observed with regard to the concept of conservation. The idea of a conservative option opposed to the development of whatever kind has now given way to the suggestion that, on the contrary, conservation is an emerging aspect of innovation in modern society. On the one hand, all development constantly adds to heritage assets laid down in the past; on the other, there cannot be any genuine conservation without the simultaneous creation of new assets.

46% of the European rural development budget is available to Eastern European countries, including Romania. The economic resources allocated can be used with the benefit of both the positive experiences and the failures recorded by Western European countries. The project which the participants visited – bringing an abandoned terraced vineyard back into production – is an example of how a system of cultivation which modern viticulture would have considered obsolete and uneconomical until a few years ago can now be seen as a viable option. Such a rehabilitation exercise automatically creates a new landscape that cannot be the same as its predecessor. This type of experiment needs to be part of a new economic approach in which, for example, quality is linked to the locality’s distinctiveness, in this instance enabling a typical product to establish itself in the increasingly difficult wine market and developing new expertise and infrastructure based on the locality and its skills pool. As marketing experts will recognise, it is hard to sell a product that lacks history, and traces of history abound in the Romanian rural landscape.

The landscape heritage and the cultural heritage are key elements of the local and regional capital that presents development opportunities, with infrastructure of various kinds, institutional mechanisms and human resources on which to draw. Harnessing this capital needs to go beyond the exploitation of the individual resources and look to the *added value* which protection of the traditional landscape can provide. Landscape protection and enhancement can be a driving force for development in Europe by putting forward a landscape-based approach that creates distinctiveness and variety through dialogue,

questioning and constant redefinition of the reference values that make up the European cultural identity.

II. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS (A) AND CLOSING PRESENTATION (B) OF THE SEVENTH MEETING OF THE WORKSHOPS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION ON “LANDSCAPE IN PLANNING POLICIES AND GOVERNANCE: TOWARDS INTEGRATED SPATIAL MANAGEMENT”, PIESTANY, SLOVAK REPUBLIC, 24-25 APRIL 2008

Within the context of the Slovak Chairmanship of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers (November 2007 - May 2008), the meeting was organised by the Council of Europe, Cultural Heritage, Landscape and Spatial Planning Division, Directorate of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage, in association with: the Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic; the Slovak Environmental Agency; the Slovak Association for Landscape Ecology IALE-SK; the Trnava Self-Governing Region; the Piestany Spa-Town.

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A. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

Mr Peter BENUSKA, Vice-president, Slovak Chamber of Architects, Member of the European ICLEI Working Group “Local Agenda 21” for the Earth Summit 1992

Mrs Maria KOZOVA, Chair of the Slovak Association for Landscape Ecology, Comenius University, Slovakia

1. Acknowledgements

The participants in the Seventh Meeting of the Workshops for the Implementation of the European Landscape Convention thanked the organisers – the Council of Europe, the Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic, the Slovak Environmental Agency, the Slovak Association for Landscape Ecology, Trnava Self-Governing Region and Piestany Spa-Town – for the work carried out and their contribution during the meeting. They also wished to thank the Environmental Fund of the Slovak Republic, which supported the workshops;

They wished to acknowledge all those responsible for the meeting: Mrs Maguelonne Déjeant-Pons, Head of the Cultural Heritage, Landscape and Spatial Planning Division, Council of Europe, Mrs Béatrice Sauvageot, Assistant, Cultural Heritage, Landscape and Spatial Planning Division, Council of Europe, Mrs Pavlina Misikova, National Co-ordinator for the European Landscape Convention, the Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic and Mrs Anna Krsakova, Director of the Centre for Rural Environment of the Slovak Environmental Agency;

They would acknowledged the cooperation of the chairs, the participation of all the speakers, and all those who have taken part in and enriched the discussions with their thoughts and opinions; to the interpreters interpreted all the ideas into English, French and Slovak; and to the all the others who made the meeting pleasant and beneficial.

2. Summary of general comments

As the central topic of the meeting was “Landscape in planning policies and governance: towards integrated spatial management”, the participants

– *reaffirmed* the importance of the European Landscape Convention (hereafter referred to as the “ELC”) as a means of implementing the principal objectives of the Council

of Europe namely in seeking common solutions to the main problems facing European society; as a helpful tool in protecting the quality of life and the well-being of Europeans in at the present time of massive development when the need to take landscape, cultural and natural values into consideration is vital;

– *appreciated* the topicality of the theme of the meeting related to the growing pressure on landscape and its use in the international context; and *stressed* the need to share experiences in the enforcement of integrated approaches to landscape. Article 4 of the Convention *Division of responsibilities* and Article 5d) *Integration of landscape into policies*, were the background of the meeting, and encouraged promotion of the territorial dimension of human rights and democracy by acknowledging the importance of measures to improve the landscape features of people's living conditions;

– *welcomed* the fact that the attention of the meeting had been drawn to the complexity of challenges in spatial planning and management facing Europe at the present time and that it will be facing on an even wider scale in the next decade; and also that attention had been paid to the practical problems related to the integration of landscape issues into spatial management in different sectors. There was general agreement that integrative spatial planning is the primary vehicle for the implementation of the ELC in member States;

– *emphasised* that the Council of Europe's member States have play a crucial role to play in assisting the development of European policies in favour of the landscape in coordination with other relevant European and international agreements;

– *note* that the ELC had already started to introduce progress in incorporating landscape into policies at European level, and, in many member States, at national, regional and local levels; so as to provide guidelines in the area of shared responsibilities at different governmental levels;

– *welcomed* the Report T-FLOR (2007)¹⁴ (Strasbourg, 25 April 2007) of the Council of Europe Conference on "The European Landscape Convention" (Strasbourg, 22 –23 March 2007);

– *warmly appreciated* Recommendation CM/Rec (2008)³ of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the Guidelines for the Implementation of the ELC (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 6 February 2008 at the 1017th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) as a guide for the continuation of the implementation process in member States;

– *welcomed* Resolution CM/Res(2008)³ on the rules governing the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 February 2008 at the 1018th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) which invites the member States to submit candidates for the first award before the end of 2008;

– *stressed* the importance of promoting the integration of different knowledge approaches to observation of the landscape (including economic, social, environmental, historic/cultural, perceptive/visual); and *supported* the significant role of specialists such as landscape ecologists, landscape architects, planners and related specialists in solving these issues as well as the importance of co-operation with experts from the different sectors;

– *stated* that sufficient attention was not yet paid to the landscape dimension with regard to urban and a peri-urban landscapes. An assumption that landscape is just a tool of

biodiversity still exists within society. In general terms, the workshop contributed to a common understanding of landscape as a broader issue;

- *agreed* that landscape planning is a tool and basis for bringing together a common approach applicable to each sectoral policy. It is vital to create an interdisciplinary mix of working teams able to integrate natural processes into urban/rural development aimed at ensuring harmony between for example the new aesthetics and ecology of territories;
- *assumed* that a form of landscape planning derives from inter-institutional partnerships and *recognised* investigative, conservative, integrative and design functions with reference to the various levels of territorial governance;
- *encouraged* involvement of all the key players including the public and private sectors, professional organisations, NGOs, wider groups of stakeholders and their networks in sharing responsibility for landscape protection, management and planning;
- *emphasised* that an important number of the presented tools and methods are possible for the implementation of integrated approaches; and the importance of the dissemination of positive experiences at European level. A successful exchange of good (and bad) practice depends on good communication tools/skills (and on correct translations);
- *welcomed* the activities of international non-governmental organisations (e.g. preparatory work for the establishment of the European Association for Landscape Ecology as the European Chapter of the International Association for Landscape Ecology);
- *hoped* that the 7th meeting had helped to increase the focus on planning and called for an adequate response for better implementation of the ELC as regards the appropriate management of space, which should integrate all aspects and sectors in all Council of Europe member States;
- *stated* that the 7th meeting was another step forward in the implementation of the ELC and *recommended* continuing the series of regular thematic workshops. Many contemporary initiatives and existing networks should coordinate their activities and provide information about coming events and activities.

3. Summary of comments issued from the four workshops /themes of the 7th Meeting

Workshop 1 - Landscape in integrated spatial management at pan-European level

The participants stated:

- There was an urgent need to include landscape in all relevant European sectoral policies and in relevant national laws (agriculture, regional development, energy, transport, urban development, nature protection).
- Because the importance of the Common Agricultural Policy is a driving force for landscape, there is the need of a review.
- Use integrated approach not only as a theoretical term, but aim at bringing it into practice through intersectoral co-operation.

- Support landscape planning as an instrument for integrated sustainable planning of the territories.
- As landscape is a complex system, it should be explained more broadly (eg in connection with the Water Framework Directive mentioned where an integrated approach is also used).

Workshop 2 - How to overcome sectorialism in the national measures to achieve integrated spatial management?

The participants stated:

- One possible way of harmonising competing interests in agriculture, nature conservation, water management, forests management and tourism within the cultural landscape could be through the implementation of the Programme for Village Renewal (example from Slovakia).
- The need to have a wider view of the current challenges facing cultural landscapes in Europe; and the special relationship between landscape and art mentioned by Triennial Apeldoorn, Netherlands.
- Landscape planning is not always successful. Constraints are imposed through the massive development of infrastructures, transport systems and industrial buildings. The important infrastructures shape a totally new spatial perception. There is a need to find innovative solutions for integrated spatial management.
- The Regional Landscape Plan (example from Sardinia) based on the link between environment/history/ settlements can provide a positive example of integrated planning approach.
- The process of landscape integration into development policies and legislation has started in the Russian Federation.
- Climatic changes will have an important impact on landscape. The relation between landscape and climate change should be addressed and investigated.

Workshop 3 - Integrated spatial management at regional and local levels

The participants stated:

- Terms such as nature, rural development and landscape are still used at random in local and regional policies. In the programmes “close” to landscape such as rural development and the network Natura 2000, landscape should be “easily” identified.
- Include landscape in spatial planning systems at every level should be essential.
- Rivers, as historical corridors, were used as an example of a driving force of future positive development which takes landscape into consideration. Public participation is more likely to be achieved if the public is involved in an issue they clearly understand.
- Use the “right language” (including music) as a tool to understand landscape.

Workshop 4 - Challenges and practical examples of landscape successes within integrated spatial management

The participants stated:

- There is a lot of potential and necessity to bring economic models into landscape management.
- The importance of gaining political will was also seen in the context of general problems of landscape policy implementation and wider public support.
- The need for an effective and clear monitoring system of Government Performance in the implementation of the ELC.

4. Summary from the discussion of participants and comments for:

a) *The Council of Europe*

- Promote positive European practices in the integrated spatial management.
- Continue the periodical assessment of the implementation of the ELC, present the results at Council of Europe conferences and consider methods for monitoring the implementation which already exist in each signatory state.
- Ensure an appropriate budget for the new Steering Committee for Cultural Heritage and Landscape of the Council of Europe (CDPATEP).
- Encourage national governments to have a common agreement of the vision (strategy) for landscapes in their country.
- Organise joint conferences and seminars with the participation of appropriate professional organisations.
- Provide a catalogue/database of good examples of landscape management.

b) *The national governments of signatory States*

- Each ministry responsible for the implementation of the ELC should be active in inviting other ministries (whose activities have a direct or indirect impact on the landscape) to assess their impact, define new guidelines and incorporate the landscape dimension into their sectoral policies and legislation (eg plans for wind turbines, roads policies, policies for development of new settlements etc.).
- Appoint two participants from each member state to the CDPATEP plenary sessions (one responsible for cultural heritage and the other for landscape).
- Invite local and regional authorities to assess the state of implementation of the ELC within the territory for which they are responsible.
- Build-up and support the capacities of local and regional authorities dealing with an integrated vision for sustainable development where landscape is incorporated.

- Recognise the importance of the values coming from the local level also as a basis for planning processes at higher levels.
- Create a national vision/strategy on landscape development (protection, management, planning).
- Find suitable ways of networking, to link professionals, the general public and other stakeholders from different backgrounds and establish new partnerships.

c) *Local and regional self-government of signatory States*

- Local and regional policies for spatial planning should take fully into account the influence of decisions on individual and social well-being in the medium and long term. Clearly recognise that the implementation of the ELC is not solely the responsibility of national governments but to share that responsibility.
- Find ways of using and implementing ideas and opinions from the general public.
- Train local community members in conservation and development of landscape.

d) *Non-governmental organisations*

- Improve coordination in the distribution of information from related activities (eg from IALE, ICOMOS, ECLAS, INSULA/UNESCO, ENELC, Landscape Europe, Landscape Research Group, European Society for Ecological Economics, CEIRE, etc.) which deal with landscape protection, planning and management for use in awareness-raising campaigns.
- The International Association for Landscape Ecology (IALE):
 - Invite Council of Europe representatives to participate in the preparatory process for the European Association for Landscape Ecology (which will be established in the framework of the 2009 European IALE Conference), because it wishes to be connected to the activities of the Council of Europe.
 - Invite Council of Europe representatives and bodies responsible for the implementation of the ELC to participate in the 2009 European IALE Conference: European Landscapes in Transformation – Challenges for Landscape Ecology and Management (Salzburg, Austria, 12-16 July 2009 (www.iale2009.eu)).

e) *Universities and scientific bodies*

- Encourage the promotion of a new approach to mutual understanding between science and society. If we wish to identify and solve problems between science, technology and different stakeholders in society, we should learn about transdisciplinarity.
- Train and prepare young specialists for a European vision of integrated spatial management.
- Implement the results of the Joint Session on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) presented during the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for

Europe” in Belgrade. These activities are important in promoting awareness of the value of landscapes in civil society and public authorities.

- Develop more research programmes on landscape.
- The need “to be engaged at the right time before the problem arrives” – be ready to bring know-how, comments, and opinions during the planning process in order not to be involved in the process “afterwards”.

5. Closing session and study visit

During the round table, the question under discussion was how to emphasise the need for robust and effective policies and systems for spatial planning and management with landscape as a major factor in the process of integrated spatial management.

The high-level meeting was organised during the workshops by the Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic with the aim of bringing together representatives of the Council of Europe and the European landscape network represented by RECEP/ENELC, UNISCAPE, and CIVILSCAPE. The state secretary presented the Slovak position as regards the process of implementation of the European Landscape Convention and he supported the idea of co-operation in the Council of Europe, the member states, the networks and all organisations which wish to be or already are involved in the implementation of the ELC.

After the close of the *Seventh Meeting of the Council of Europe of the Workshops for the Implementation of the ELC* by the organising committee on 25 April 2008, participants took part in two landscape study tours related to the discussed themes. Both optional study tours took place on Saturday 26 April 2008.

B. CLOSING PRESENTATIONS

Prospects for the European Landscape Convention

Mr Yves LUGINBUHL, Professor at the University of Paris, France, Expert of the Council of Europe

The European Landscape Convention, which has now been signed and ratified by a majority of Council of Europe member states, seems to be enjoying greater success than other European conventions. It is a source of hope in the possibility of enhancing European landscapes which have been transformed by the development of numerous public and private activities, often regarded as harmful to European citizens' quality of life.

The European Landscape Convention was drawn up by the Council of Europe, an organisation whose primary role was, and is, to safeguard and promote human rights and democracy. Incorporating landscapes into this objective was in principle no easy task, and discussions, explanations and persuasion were necessary to win people round to the idea. The vast majority of European citizens continue to identify the landscape first and foremost with the selective, elitist concept of outstanding landscapes, such as those which Unesco recognises as world heritage sites. However, as Article 2 of the Landscape Convention clearly states, its scope covers *all* landscapes:

... this Convention applies to the entire territory of the Parties and covers natural, rural, urban and peri-urban areas. It includes land, inland water and marine areas. It concerns landscapes that might be considered outstanding as well as everyday or degraded landscapes.

It is possible to perceive a direct connection between this definition of the convention's scope and the spread of human rights and democracy. This is because by broadening the issue of landscapes to the everyday surroundings of people living in Europe the convention emphasises that the democratic process must also attempt to improve people's living conditions and to entitle them, through the exercise of democracy, to a say in policy decisions concerning the places where they live and work, where they travel, where they spend their leisure time, and so on. Democracy, which, to quote Winston Churchill, is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried, is a political system which gives power to the people. It functions according to rules whereby certain individuals represent the people, having been elected in their name. Elected representatives must accordingly concern themselves with the quality of people's surroundings, which is one of the conditions of access to social and individual well-being.

The European Landscape Convention is also consistent with the Aarhus Convention, which provides:

In order to contribute to the protection of the right of every person of present and future generations to live in an environment adequate to his or her health and well-being, each Party shall guarantee the rights of access to information, public participation in decision-making, and access to justice in environmental matters in accordance with the provisions of this Convention.

Article 6 of the Aarhus Convention moreover goes further, specifying that public participation shall be implemented from the outset:

4. Each Party shall provide for early public participation, when all options are open and effective public participation can take place.

The future prospects for the European Landscape Convention accordingly follow a quite natural course: enhancing the landscapes which form part of the quality of life for people in Europe necessitates greater democracy and, in that sense, entails public participation in the decision-making process and in ensuring justice in environmental matters. As pointed out in the Landscape Convention, improving the quality of life involves a process of identifying landscapes and their characteristics, setting landscape quality objectives, determining landscape planning, protection or management measures and evaluating those measures. It also involves promoting education and the training of those responsible for implementing sector-specific policies, of which the landscape must be part and parcel, and raising awareness among the general public and, in particular, elected representatives.

Expressed in these terms, this foreseeable future approach seems quite logical and fairly well mapped out, although its implementation is encountering problems linked to various political, social and cognitive factors. In the current context, however, new prospects are opening up based on experiences that show European societies' capacity for action to improve the quality of life. At the same time, there is absolutely no call for euphoria. Although the European Landscape Convention has paved the way for possible action, it is still in its infancy and many obstacles stand in its way.

Difficulties in implementing the European Landscape Convention

The difficulties that may be encountered in implementing the European Landscape Convention do not solely have to do with the issue of disseminating the new definition of the landscape proposed by the Council of Europe throughout European society, not least among all national, regional and local elected representatives, although it is true that old ideas die hard, and it will take many awareness-raising activities and much persuasion to bring these politicians to espouse the principles of the European Landscape Convention in their spatial development policies. The difficulties have three main causes:

Unequal democratic progress in European countries

There can be no denying the fact that the political changes in eastern Europe were a key phase in the development of democracy. The countries formerly governed by collectivist political regimes acceded late to democracy, in the early 1990s. Democracy is not something that can be learned in one day; it is long and difficult to establish, necessitating debate and the definition of strict rules for the political functioning of societies. The forty years for which the countries of eastern Europe were governed by this authoritarian regime instilled behaviour patterns that led to a collapse of civic responsibilities, although the citizens of the countries concerned were themselves often very much aware of the political system's shortcomings.

Establishing a working democracy therefore takes time, and vigilance is necessary to avoid these shortcomings, which have often led to corruption and cronyism. This "political culture" cannot be fully erased and has left traces of behaviour that cannot qualify as truly democratic.

In this respect, countries which have lost the habit of collective debate of social issues, albeit divisive ones, encounter problems with the implementation of the European Landscape Convention, which in fact recommends debate among citizens, elected representatives,

practitioners, scientists, etc., as a means of arriving at policy decisions that are carefully considered and command general acceptance. Needless to say, such debate must be structured and recognised. Some doubt subsists that societies which have lived through the upheavals of collectivism can subscribe to this political principle from the outset. Time is needed for social ties to be restored and for collective debate, for the time being an often unpopular concept in ex-collectivist countries, to gain acceptance.

Conversely, the many restrictions experienced by these societies in their access to resources and to the media forged a strong sense of social solidarity, which it has been possible to observe in action in most of the countries of central and eastern Europe during periods of political tension. This is perhaps an opportunity to be exploited by those with the political will to implement the European Landscape Convention.

This observation does not, however, imply that all the countries of western Europe are shining examples of democracy. Those holding political office have indeed been elected by the people, but it is a known fact that the democratic process, in particular public participation in political decision-making, is still not perfect or well and truly established. Attempts to involve the public in the spatial development process at local level also run into difficulties linked to the novelty of these methods and lack of practice, to improvisation, to the role played by certain local leaders and also, it must be said, to fear of speaking out in local communities where family or neighbourhood quarrels have left their mark.

Unequal living standards in European countries

It is self-evident that living standards and access to wealth, amenities, job security, health protection, etc. are not equal in Europe. There is also clearly a difference between western and eastern Europe in this respect.

It is accordingly inconceivable that the nations of central and eastern Europe should not seek to catch up this shortfall. The European Union of course plays a major role here by fostering investment in these countries' economies, communication systems, etc. The situation could be compared with that of Spain and Portugal when they first joined the EU. Thirty years later, these countries have made huge progress in terms of both democracy and economic growth. The considerable sums invested by the European Commission have been a driving force for their development.

The transition to democracy in central and eastern Europe has however gone hand in hand with the introduction of free market economies, which have their advantages and their drawbacks. The latter include a tendency towards individualism and to seek to maximise profits at all costs. This is understandable. That individuals in eastern Europe who experienced hardship should wish to acquire the consumer goods available in western Europe is in point of fact logical. However, the speed of development entails a risk that landscape considerations may be disregarded in the very short term. Building and infrastructure projects, investments in energy production installations, industrial plant and so on, may be decided fast and with scant regard for environmental and landscape criteria. These decisions lead to transformations in the landscape which may jeopardise its quality. In the farming sector the fact that certain regions of eastern Europe are lagging behind may tempt them to switch to the intensive farming methods that have severely altered western European landscapes and could have harmful consequences for biodiversity and sustainable development.

It is therefore understandable that certain central and east European countries should be concerned to contain these trends and wish to implement binding measures so as to control, through coercion, the processes that transform the landscape. However, it is by no means certain that making the European Landscape Convention a EU Directive would really have effective results. Moreover, the convention's very essence lies in the fact that it is non-binding and wagers on capacities for negotiation and discussion among those involved. It would accordingly run counter to the spirit of the convention to seek to make it binding.

Unequal degrees of knowledge among European players

The European Landscape Convention undoubtedly qualifies as something of a success in the light of the number of signatures and ratifications by Council of Europe member states. However, it must be acknowledged that this success is above all an outcome of the mobilisation of a restricted group of like-minded persons, who have succeeded in initiating a movement, thanks to the action taken by the Council of Europe of course and also to networking and to the sincere commitments of certain politicians. Many players remain to be convinced and to commit themselves to the convention's fundamental objective of enhancing the everyday landscapes of the bulk of European citizens.

Here too it is a matter of inequality, of unequal knowledge and understanding of the complexity of the processes linking the landscape to politics, ecology, social issues, etc. This is not merely a question of awareness-raising but concerns a deep lack of knowledge of the history of landscapes and of their links with political or ecological processes.

This objective of enhancing the everyday landscape of European citizens opens up a complex new field. The European scientific community which has taken an interest in these matters is only recently established and not yet well-organised, despite the action of specialist NGOs. Although knowledge has progressed, there are still whole areas where ignorance reigns, in particular concerning the processes whereby the disciplines involved interact. However, this issue of knowledge does not just affect the scientific sphere. Among the non-scientists involved a landscape culture is cruelly lacking, which does not mean that they are insensitive to these matters. An entire knowledge process must be developed, based on revelation rather than learning.

Everyone has their own sensibilities regarding the landscape, but these have been masked by beliefs, stereotypical ideas or hackneyed political and social models. Awareness-raising is not enough: it is necessary to reveal to people, through these existing, but often buried social sensibilities, what quality of life and spatial development issues mean for them. It is in particular through debate and hands-on experience that these sensibilities can be brought to light and lead to the espousal of an essential objective: reconciling the individual and the general interest and, conversely, ensuring that the general interest also reflects a convergence of individual interests. This is of course an ambitious objective, but experiences of its pursuit virtually all over Europe show that the efforts are not in vain.

Another knowledge-linked question is posed: that of evaluation. Landscape planning, protection and management experience to date has scarcely been subject to strict evaluation. This is essential, as, without evaluation, no universally applicable lesson learned from this experience can be validated.

Despite these obstacles, it is possible to envisage prospects for the future implementation of the European Landscape Convention that are consistent with the principles of promotion of human rights and democracy defended by the Council of Europe.

Development prospects for the European Landscape Convention

In contrast with the difficulties mentioned above, certain factors are conducive to the implementation of the European Landscape Convention and augur well for its future. These are linked to higher standards of education in Europe, to a growing awareness of ecological problems and of the dangers posed by climate change, to social demand that politicians listen to grassroots aspirations for society, and to greater expectations regarding enhancement of the quality of life.

Conditions conducive to the development of the European Landscape Convention

- a) *A rise in standards of education.* The general level of education of people in Europe has undoubtedly progressed. Although this progress has probably been unevenly distributed,¹ it has made people better able to understand the processes of social and environmental change taking place and, above all, more thirsty for knowledge of them. It is nonetheless true that, at the same time as standards were rising, some young Europeans, particularly in large conurbations, suffered the adverse consequences of the slowdown in economic growth. However, generally speaking, the training dispensed by education systems has improved and, in particular, the system of European exchanges has helped push up levels of education and of knowledge. There has been no full evaluation of the European exchange programmes for students and academics, but these schemes hopefully help foster curiosity about processes of socio-economic and ecological change in Europe: exchanges, notably access to knowledge of other countries' experiences, are a means of enriching young people's cognitive potential, making them more capable of independent thought and of drawing comparisons between situations in different countries and regions.

This rise in standards of education could be assimilated with the emergence of societies that are more ready for debate, that is to say more capable of initiating discussion, assessing the impact and the implications of policy decisions and raising the question of their improvement. Without seeing the future through rose-tinted glasses, which is naturally not the aim here, this increased capacity for debate can be regarded as beneficial to the introduction of procedures or platforms for debate whereby public participation in the definition of landscape quality objectives can become more feasible and more effective.

- b) *Greater ecological awareness.* Although environmental concerns have not led to the emergence of truly powerful "green" parties in Europe, there is no denying the fact that worries about the future of the planet, and climate change in particular, have fostered the development of a social conscience regarding environmental matters. All the traditional political parties have moreover given their manifestos an environmental dimension, and sustainable development objectives are omni-present, even in the titles of national ministries.

¹ In this connection see Eurydice, Education and Culture DG, 2007, "Key data on higher education in Europe". The data shows an increase in the number of higher education graduates, although the percentage of graduates in the population as a whole remains small. However, this percentage was calculated for all the age cohorts. The charts show a considerable difference in the percentage of graduates between the youngest and the oldest cohorts.

This greater ecological awareness is also attributable to tendencies European citizens are able to see for themselves as they go about their daily lives and to certain health impacts, particularly in regions strongly affected by heavy industrial activities, notably in the chemicals sector. In some regions, although the political authorities may attempt to cover up the facts, illnesses are on the rise and epidemiological studies have shown an increasing number of cancers or allergies due to environmental damage.

The observed decline in the quality of foodstuffs plays an essential role in this greater ecological awareness. In France perceptions of the landscape have changed over the last two decades - formerly identified with rural areas, it is now associated with nature - precisely because of problems linked to intensive farming. Fears about bovine spongiform encephalitis (BSE) caused a 40% drop in consumption of meat over a sufficiently long period for people to call into question intensive, industrialised production methods. Other health scares have included foot-and-mouth disease, avian flu and, of course, pollution of water sources with nitrates and agricultural pesticides. All these news stories have caused people to become wary of “modern” industrial farming methods and raised awareness of environmental issues. Mention must be made of the fact that young people attach more importance to these issues than the older generations, which is moreover understandable. Young people’s greater ecological awareness is an asset for the future of environment and landscape policies.

- c) *Greater demand by citizens to be lent an ear.* Surveys conducted at various times and places by scientists (sociologists, geographers, anthropologists) show a growing desire, and even demand, among citizens that politicians should listen to them. This can be seen both in the growing number and rising membership of various kinds of citizens’ movements and also in the converse tendency of a not insignificant number of people to lose confidence in politicians, sometimes reflected in high abstention rates during elections.

It is true that such mobilisation is more often than not to be observed at local level, where the population indeed have the impression that they can more effectively influence local policy decisions. Recent surveys in France show the emergence of movements taking the form of local associations or of branches of national NGOs. This applies for instance to the many local pressure groups against the building of wind farms or domestic waste incinerators. The construction of the high speed rail links has led to the emergence of, sometimes violent, protest movements, as was the case with the building of the South-East TGV line. In England, the construction of the high-speed train link between Dover and London was delayed because of landscape concerns. Numerous examples could be cited. This of course does not mean that all infrastructure projects systematically meet with public opposition. Local people are more often than not in favour of such projects, although they are increasingly being challenged, a sign of this growing social awareness.

- d) *Expectations regarding enhancement of the quality of life.* These are clearly linked to the process described above. However, a distinction can be drawn between the two sets of demands, since concerns about the quality of life are not systematically bound up with ecological issues, but have more to do with problems encountered in people’s daily lives, particularly at a local level. Local communities are indeed very vigilant about transformations of their living conditions.

Some observers consider that this vigilance reflects fear of change. However, assimilating protest about transformation of living conditions with fear of change is,

firstly, an over-simplification and, secondly, a form of disregard for citizens' concerns. Fear of change has to do with the distrust of political circles described above and with legitimate concerns that change will result in transformations of living conditions that leave people worse off than before.

Change must naturally be precisely and carefully explained, so as not to leave people with the impression that it benefits only a privileged section of the population, but on the contrary show that it aims to serve the general interest. The desire to be given a hearing, combined with expectations regarding enhancement of the quality of life, thus calls for an information effort and, above all, for the initiation of public debate, but under precise, that is to say organised, conditions.

Organised public debate

The European Landscape Convention underlines the need for public participation in the process of identifying landscapes and determining landscape planning, protection and management measures. However, it does not say what form this public participation should take, rightly leaving the choice to those involved, whether at the national, regional or local level.

Observation of the past experience of many European countries, particularly in western Europe, shows how vital it is not to improvise public participation but to give careful consideration to methods and arrangements whereby the various factors to be taken into account can be duly weighed.

- a) *The form taken by the debating platform* will depend on the level at which the debate takes place. The local level is clearly the most appropriate for public participation. However, that level alone cannot suffice. In matters of landscape policy there is a need to ensure consistency between local government measures, and development schemes, such as those concerning transport infrastructure, which are often implemented at higher levels. We shall come back to this later. For the time being, let us focus on the local level.

Public participation can take different forms, as can be seen from current experience: public meetings, on-line forums, organised joint field visits, festive events that may constitute an opportunity to initiate a debate. As pointed out by the specialists who have studied the experiences already under way, chairing or moderating a debate is an important aspect. However, the chair or moderator cannot replace the practitioners whose task it is to make formal proposals. While organising speaking turns and times, the person chairing or moderating the debate must remain in the background and allow the discussion to develop freely.

Public debate can also be conceived as a series of steps which contribute to the process recommended by the European Landscape Convention: identifying landscapes, setting landscape quality objectives, determining landscape planning, protection and management measures. In organising the timing of the public participation process, it is also essential to avoid skipping certain steps and to allow time for ideas arising from the initial discussions to mature. Ideally, the participants should perhaps be allowed to decide on the timing they prefer.

- b) *Placing debate on a formal footing.* The proceedings must result in the production of various kinds of documents: maps of landscapes of local interest, local know-how atlases, sketches, block diagrams showing the knowledge of the participants present during the debate. This documentation process is an essential step, since it ensures that a record is kept of the debate. It is what will survive of it and can testify to the importance of the debate at the local level; it is also a form of transmission of the participants' knowledge and concerns. This is a field where innovative solutions are called for so that the outcome is clearly legible for all the participants.
- c) *The participants' place and role.* Distribution of the roles among the various parties involved (elected representatives, technicians, chairs or moderators, scientists, NGOs, local people) should not convey the impression that decisions lie with the population. The argument that participation leads to disorder is merely a strategic criticism relied on by this method's opponents. It is for the policy-makers to take decisions, that is to say the elected representatives, who must assume the responsibility for which they were in point of fact elected. It is particularly with this aspect in mind that a debate must be organised, so as to counter suspicions of disorder and ineffectiveness that may hang over participation arrangements. The scientists propose scientific insights, the technicians the possible solutions and local people their specific knowledge of the area concerned. These contributions may be supplemented by NGOs. But it is for the elected representatives to take decisions.
- d) *Mobilising knowledge* is also a means of organising debate. A debate can be an opportunity to gather grassroots or lay knowledge and information on the values attached to the area concerned, thereby contributing to the identification of landscapes. However, it is important to think about how and when the scientific and technical inputs will be made - at the beginning, in the course or at the end of the debate? These issues must indeed be addressed and thought through depending on the form taken by the debate and its assigned objectives.

This mobilisation of knowledge must aim for interaction between grassroots or lay knowledge and scientific knowledge, with the aim of fostering a deliberate, well-informed exchange. It is clear that scientific knowledge has an essential role, but that of lay or naturalistic knowledge is just as important, as it is a source of information the scientists cannot necessarily contribute. At the same time, performing surveys prior to the debate is also a means of defusing internal quarrels or misunderstandings: an experience along these lines conducted in the Alps showed that publicising the results of surveys concerning the perception of the landscape within the local community enabled those partaking in the debate to realise that other people's views differed from their own and to accept other standpoints.

- e) *Validating the conclusions of the debate.* This may seem to be a mere formality, but it is nonetheless of essential symbolic importance. Validating the documents produced marks the agreement reached by all the participants and is a form of recognition, firstly, of their commitment and motivation and, secondly, of the shared acceptance of the discussions' conclusions.

Interaction between policy-making tiers

We have seen that the local level is that at which public participation in the policy-making process leading to the determination of landscape protection, management or planning measures can most easily be envisaged. However, the question has also been raised of wider

scales of action in spatial development matters, such as those involved in transport infrastructure projects or in schemes for the protection of larger-than-local landscapes.

The resulting need for consistency between the measures implemented on different scales also entails interaction between the different levels. Although, in accordance with the subsidiarity principle, priority is to be given to the local tier, it is nonetheless absolutely vital to be able to combine planning, protection and management priorities. Interaction means simultaneously applying a “bottom-up” and a “top-down” approach. For economic reasons it may be advisable for the regional or national level to manage an infrastructure or protection scheme, in which case the information will flow from the national or the regional to the local tier, and conversely local wishes and demands can inform public policy at national level.

This may apply, in particular, to sector-specific policies, which must take into consideration the landscape dimension, as stipulated in the convention. For instance, the Common Agricultural Policy should be able to take on board local demands regarding the management of rural landscapes. Easier said than done, some might say. However, it is a known fact that sector-specific policies (farming, housing, energy, etc.) have a far more radical effect on the landscape, and those policies are sometimes guided by decisions taken at an international level (WTO) or linked to processes over which the local level has no control. It is accordingly essential to manage to swing sector-specific policies towards greater consideration of the landscape dimension.

The gamble that can be taken here consists in assuming that, under the bottom-up process, local demands will transit via political channels to reach the policy-makers at national level, who will in turn relay these expectations to the international level. This is in a way what happens in Europe in the case of EU environmental regulations, although it must be acknowledged that this process is not divorced from the action of the NGOs who lobby the Commission in Brussels (an example being Agenda 21).

Consideration of this landscape dimension is just as necessary in the European policy field. If, as shown by the work commissioned by the discussion group on implementation of the European Landscape Convention, there are numerous programmes of action that claim to take an interest in landscape issues,² it is essential that this concern should not be solely linked to spatial development or educational schemes, but should also be strongly connected with economic policies, such as the Common Agricultural Policy in particular.

Experimentation and evaluation through feedback

In many countries of Europe, a large number of varied local experiences are taking place, which may or may not profess to identify with the spirit of the European Landscape Convention. They are in point of fact based on public participation in either the identification of landscapes or the definition of landscape planning, protection or management projects. They rely on different methods and are, in a way, innovative and experimental in their approach.

It might be said that this is where the future lies and that earlier developments were merely based on observation of these experiences and more general considerations. However, although involving local players is valuable and is to be encouraged, it is necessary to draw

² Examples being the Interreg, COST and Erasmus programmes. See the report *European programmes: opportunities for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention* (T-FLOR (2008) 2 Prov.)

lessons from it that permit progress to be made with the European Landscape Convention's methods and implementation. It is therefore vital to evaluate this approach to see whether it is effective and is worth enhancing, improving, discussing and disseminating via the networks of NGOs and local and regional authorities.

The main lesson that can be drawn from these experiences lies in their ability to culminate in a genuine landscape protection, management or planning project at local level. How can this local landscape project be construed? A local landscape project must not be confused with an architectural or infrastructure project with a given time-limit. The landscape is constantly changing and it would be pointless to seek to set a time-limit on a landscape project. When the measures devised are applied they will already be outdated and their future implementation will need to be reviewed. A landscape project involves an ongoing process, which produces information of value for future developments.

This therefore means that a landscape project is a process that begins with the identification of landscapes via public participation, goes through a stage of discussion and validation of landscape quality objectives and culminates in the definition of landscape protection, management and planning measures. Once the ball has been set rolling, there will be no end to the process, which feeds on its own experience, and the lessons learned from the process itself influence the decisions, which are subject to review as their implementation creates a new landscape or modifies an existing one. This does not mean that decisions are reversed, but on the contrary that the way the process is conducted makes it possible to improve the methods and to make progress with the definition of landscape protection, management and planning measures.

This constitutes a novel approach to landscape activities and can bring innovations in the ways communities interact with the landscapes in which they live and which are part and parcel of their existence. It also represents a new perception of these communities' relations with the political sphere, as, if the process enables their effective participation, they will feel that they are listened to, and their landscape will bear the marks of this. This is also a way of conferring greater responsibilities on citizens and enabling them to identify with landscapes they have helped to shape and to breath life into.

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