



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

natururopa

n° 95 / 2001 • FRANÇAIS



*Le patrimoine
rural
européen*



n° 95 - 2001

naturopa

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Depuis 1993 Naturopa est imprimé sur papier sans chlore.

Certaines photos de ce numéro sont des photos primées lors du Concours européen de photographies organisé dans le cadre de la Campagne «L'Europe, un patrimoine commun» du Conseil de l'Europe en 1999-2000.

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Le patrimoine rural européen



Nos espaces ruraux perdent-ils progressivement leur âme, leur identité, leur spécificité? Tirillé entre ville et productivité, le «terroir» est plus que jamais soumis à de multiples pressions qui bouleversent tant les modes de vie traditionnels que les rythmes de la nature.

Retrouver et parfois même découvrir sans vision passéiste la valeur de ce patrimoine, apprécier et reconnaître la valeur des identités paysagères, culturelles et naturelles, tel est le défi auquel nous sommes à présent confrontés. Constitué tout à la fois d'éléments matériels et immatériels relevant de domaines aussi divers que l'histoire, les arts et la culture, le monde rural est aussi et tout d'abord patrimoine naturel constitué de sa faune et de sa flore, et des paysages qui l'enveloppent.

A l'origine de notre identité commune, le patrimoine rural est d'une infinie richesse architecturale, culturelle, linguistique et folklorique. Il convient ainsi de conserver et de valoriser les produits du terroir, les techniques, les savoirs-faire et les outils traditionnels, tout comme les dialectes, les chants, les danses, les musiques, et les contes qui font la diversité de nos campagnes.

La préservation de ce bien commun donne un sens à l'évolution de nos sociétés. En quête d'authenticité l'homme moderne puise ses racines dans le monde rural et aspire de plus en plus à s'y retrouver. Reconnaître la valeur du passé, protéger et mettre en valeur ce patrimoine indispensable au développement économique, social et culturel, telle est la tâche qui nous incombe.

Le Conseil de l'Europe a commencé ce nouveau siècle avec le lancement en l'an 2000 d'une vaste campagne de sensibilisation au patrimoine naturel et culturel intitulée «L'Europe, un patrimoine commun». Si celle-ci est à présent achevée, l'esprit qui l'a animée continue à régner.

Adoptés à Hanovre en septembre 2000 par les Ministres responsables de l'Aménagement du territoire des Etats membres du Conseil de l'Europe, les «Principes directeurs pour le développement durable du Continent européen» énoncent ainsi une série de mesures devant conduire à un développement des zones rurales en tant qu'espace de vie, d'activités économiques, de récréation et en tant qu'espace naturel. Il conviendra de veiller à leur mise en œuvre afin de créer de nouveaux partenariats villes-campagnes et de promouvoir un développement territorial durable des zones rurales alliant développement et protection des valeurs patrimoniales paysagères, naturelles et culturelles.

Le présent numéro marque l'ouverture d'une nouvelle période de la revue «Naturopa», qui s'ouvre désormais aux thèmes du patrimoine culturel, du paysage et du développement territorial durable.

Walter Schwimmer
Secrétaire général du Conseil de l'Europe

Discovering, knowing and identifying the rural heritage

Operation “Rural Heritage”: an example of co-operation between civil society and the authorities

The organisation and development of cultural activities in rural areas are sustained by associations carrying out a wide range of activities. In France, the state helps and encourages such associations. The agreement signed in 1990 between the Ministries of Agriculture and Culture sets two objectives for co-operation:

- encourage creative activities and the dissemination of artistic and cultural activities in rural areas;
- give rural populations the means to decide what is to be done with the proceeds from the enhancement of their heritage and allow them to reap the benefits of this enhancement.

In this context, the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries launched the “Rural Heritage” operation to encourage people to look at, show off, preserve and enhance this heritage. It is based on a conceptual approach whereby items are considered as part of the heritage not because of their intrinsic worth but by virtue of the meaning with which they are invested. This approach, known in French as “patrimonialisation”, operates through partnerships and makes use of specific tools.

An approach based on encouragement

The operation does not involve regulations or administrative procedures nor are incentives offered from public funds. The aim is to raise the awareness of inhabitants and “users” of the rural world of the value of its heritage by showing them that it is an integral part of their identity and an asset. It is a part of the collective memory and must be handed down to future generations.

Too often underrated, even despised in the name of a certain conception of modernity, the rural heritage has suffered thoughtless destruction and is still under threat. The operation’s first objective is therefore to acknowledge it for what it is and present it to the general public. The second objective is to enhance it without spoiling it. This involves thinking about how it is to be used.

A new conceptual approach

No object or skill is a heritage item in itself. It becomes part of the heritage because of the “meaning” with which it is invested. In order to decide what is to be done with it, its relationship to time, as a vector of memory, to space, as a geographical identifier, and to a group or society, as an indicator of belonging, must be assessed. Ethnologists studying the obvious link between the rural heritage and farming societies have enlarged its scope. It turns out to be made up of material and immaterial components related to a wide variety of fields: history, architecture, the arts, culture (languages, songs, stories, music,

dances, etc.), techniques, skills, including food-processing skills, the environment, the fauna and flora, natural and built landscapes, and so on.

This approach has made for a special new relationship, unconnected with the legal tie that exists between a heritage item and its keeper, with the persons or bodies that show an interest in it, a relationship based on proximity, knowledge, power and mediation. Having thus become common property, the heritage item's destination is dependent on an approach entailing the participation of the various parties involved.

When the heritage item's given meaning and chosen usage and society's expectations come together, there is potential for the development of saleable or non-saleable cultural, touristic, craft and local products. Inhabitants are prompted to support projects that help to improve their living conditions and environment. This is what is meant by "life heritage", an idea that can transform the image of rural areas and help to "redefine" them. The heritage becomes a driving force for regional development.

Operation "Rural Heritage" fits into this context at a time of change, when, given the economic upheaval and ecological disasters, the search for sustainable development is calling production methods and consumer habits into question. So-called traditional skills are no longer seen as outmoded but as alternative solutions because they are adaptable. The concern of those behind the operation is to enable experience of innovative local initiatives to be shared.

The impetus of partnership

This impetus lies at the heart of the scheme. In order to foster public debate on the rural heritage, the operation is building networks, even networks of networks, of all the various professions, associations, institutions, elected representatives, and so on, involved.

The operation, which was launched through national representative bodies, is coordinated by a steering committee and local committees on which the partners involved in rural events and development are represented. But the enhancement projects are set up in the field, by the authorities and by associations, which are engaged in concrete activities, such as making inventories with the help of the public, organising visits and holding events to make sites, objects, skills and products known. These activities can be identified as part of the operation by the local committees on request.

The use of specific tools

Local partners in the project can find information to help them with their schemes in the "rural heritage observation guide" published by the Ministry of Agriculture, the result of work carried out by a multidisciplinary team. The project, which has been given the seal of approval of the "Europe, a common heritage" campaign, can serve as a basis for similar work in other countries. There will shortly be a guide providing technical, administrative and financial information on procedures for preserving and enhancing the heritage.

Observe the past to build the future and look to the future to uphold the past: this is the basic principle for enhancing the heritage, a means for rural citizens to participate actively in the development of the countryside.

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European rural landscapes: an uninterrupted sequence of gardens

European rural landscapes, “an uninterrupted sequence of gardens”: that is how the agricultural landscape was often described by 19th century agronomists, botanists and men of letters. In their view, it was a *work* produced by human effort according to the rules of good practice. Farmland has been built up through the ages by the farmers and stockbreeders who have used it and by vast overarching schemes, using natural materials like vegetation, water, soil and stones. There are the dry-stone wall terraces that have shaped numerous hillsides to make vineyards, olive groves, fruit and chestnut orchards, etc; complex irrigation systems to cultivate the plains; mountain land that has been deforested to make way for production systems and grazing land and the seasonal migration of people and livestock; the networks of roads and paths intended to improve trade, military and religious communications, and so on.

A historical object

The rural landscape can be seen as a vast and complex historical object, fashioned by humankind and nature over the centuries, no different from the architectural heritage that has long been protected by national and international instruments (churches, castles, palaces, villas, industrial archaeological sites, gardens, historic centres, and so forth), the latest being the Charter of Cracow 2000, the first conservation charter to cover the landscape as well as the architectural heritage.

The landscape is therefore a genuine historical document, peppered with vestiges of the past; it is a vast archive, to be used to increase our knowledge of the culture, climate and vegetation of the past, the techniques used and the way people lived, among other things. It is a palimpsest, a document that is constantly being transformed, bearing myriad accounts of the eras that have gone before. It is an open page, on which traces of the past mingle with those left by the present, which ceaselessly modifies them. We, and Europe, are living through a period of history that is characterised by major territorial, economic, cultural and political changes. The landscape has become a sort of mirror in which peoples can seek their identity and single out their distinguishing features, so that they make changes on the basis of an awareness of their own past, while respecting and enhancing the individual characteristics of each and every place. The meaning of the word “landscape” is therefore much wider and more complex today than the meanings of words such as “view” or “panorama” that were used until halfway through the twentieth century and featured in many national conservation laws aimed solely at protecting a few privileged areas. On the other hand, the landscape is not the environment (or nature): they are two different ways of looking at and conceiving, using two different coloured glasses, a single large object: the land, the place where people live their lives.

The changes that have taken place over the last few decades, particularly as a result of industrialisation and attempts to pursue a more rational approach to farming, have led to over-farming of the most productive areas (along with simplification and homogenisation of the land on paper, the deterioration of the environment, and the splitting up and reduction of activities) and the abandonment or under-use of small, out-of-the-way plots

of land and land that is difficult to cultivate (hillsides and mountainsides, etc.). Today's industrial wastelands leave many areas empty, full of potential and with serious environmental and landscape problems. Some parts of the palimpsest have been impoverished; other parts have been spoiled, abandoned or threatened, but almost none of it has been totally destroyed.

An overall approach

Today, an overall approach to the rural landscape is needed, an approach that is capable not only of understanding, protecting and enhancing those values inherited from the past that are still recognisable, but also of implementing a policy to reclaim land that has been downgraded (dumps, quarries, mines, industrial wasteland, and so on) and bringing quality to all those areas that, like the outskirts of cities, have never had any, or, like certain industrial agricultural areas, have lost much of it.

Understanding in order to protect

Understanding is essential to any policy to protect the assets of the rural landscape. We must move on from a simple visual impression - still the most common approach - to a more complex interpretation of the landscape's features, problems and potential, and of the general trend. Widespread and painstaking action is needed to identify, catalogue and study the architectural features, materials, building techniques, etc., that tell the history of the inherited landscape. No stone must be left unturned (every terrace, boundary wall, ornamental flowerbed, etc., must be covered). Landscapes are not made up of a simple collection of objects, but of the remains of numerous historical functional systems. Traditional technical solutions (which are often not obsolete and offer a wealth of valuable information) must be studied and re-used alongside contemporary methods, and adapted to suit modern living and working conditions, which are a far cry from the hard-working rural world that produced these solutions and that has gone for good.

A consensus for protecting and developing the landscape

A widespread asset like the rural landscape needs widespread protection and development and, of course, widespread consensus. However, it is not enough to raise public awareness of rural landscapes' historical, cultural and architectural significance; their importance as an economic asset and their usefulness to society and the individual also has to be explained. One need only think of the positive effects of tourism (although they are sometimes very difficult to control) on minor hillside and mountain sites, for example.

Fostering participation and improving management

Rural landscapes have required, and continue to require, substantial, regular and careful maintenance by various operators if the transformations ceaselessly wrought by nature are to be monitored and managed. This includes work to prevent damage, along with spatial development and the conservation of the natural heritage. Today, such work is

generally carried out by specific bodies which are often subject to separate, and sometimes conflicting, rules and instruments (in fields ranging from agriculture to tourism, from the environment and nature to public works, etc.). There is a need to improve the instruments governing landscape development and the management of the whole complexity of territorial and human relations, as well as legislative protection and spatial planning. Farmers should be given support, not only because they generate income (for which they receive a great deal of assistance in Europe) but also because they manage the land, and should therefore be supported in recognition of their usefulness to society. Finally, participation and consultation instruments should be devised and improved to reconcile the interests and demands of the various sections of society.

In the 19th century, the mountain landscape was celebrated as a genuine monument, one of the cornerstones of national identity both in Switzerland and in the United States. The landscape can play just as important a role today in building Europe.

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Rural built architecture in Europe

It is a privilege to write about rural architecture as one of the most important parts of our heritage. The countryside of Europe covers 85% of the continent, more than half of its people live there. But the most important statement is that the European national, local, even individual identity and quality of this living space can be recognised only together with the specifics of rural architecture. The great diversity of "architectural landscapes" within regional and European recognition are the basic values of this heritage. While the political and national boundaries were changing, the cultures that built the rural architectural traditions of Europe have been remarkably persistent and resilient.

We can trace the history of European rural architecture back through thousands of years. But today's rural architecture created its values in the last centuries together with the growing awareness of the possibility to enhance the beauty, identity and quality of landscapes. Finally this was the reason why "vernacular buildings" were classified as architecture. Today we accept that every building from a most humble cottage to the towering village church can be an important part of rural architecture creating the identity of a landscape or a region.

An extraordinary diversity

Rural architecture in Europe is usually divided into greater or smaller regions with typical housing styles. The Mediterranean area represents regional reminiscences of the heritage of classic Roman or Greek periods. The rest of the continent developed throughout its history alpine, Baltic, central European, Gallic, Germanic, Slavic, Nordic and similar regional specifics of rural heritage with more or less distinct connections to the neighbouring regions (see the "*Encyclopaedia of vernacular architecture of the World*", Cambridge Press, 1997). But, within each of these regions, a great richness of architectural variety is to be found.

From the smallest round, dry stone huts in the Mediterranean region or the wooden, turf-roofed shepherd's huts of the Samis in Lapland, there are many relics of a long architectural history still in use today. The "growing" houses around the farmyards in the Mediterranean or in the Pannonic region represented not only a specific type of rural architecture but also served as the inspiration for modern housing.

Complex development of simple smoke-houses to perfect farms, residential houses and country castles all over Europe created the real images of all landscapes. Churches and later the local craft and industrial buildings built as individual entities with less tradition, blended into the specifics of a region, landscape or village. The creativity of rural architecture was always very high - though the financial possibilities were not on the same level. In many cases the aristocrats, landlords, artists or businessmen have built their favourite resorts to support special landscapes.

The Slovenian example

But it is also a privilege to live in a small country in the heart of Europe where all these characteristics of rural architecture can be found. My country, Slovenia, is in fact part of a richly diversified region of alpine, Mediterranean, central European and eastern European influences. Though young as an independent country, it has a long tradition in rural architecture featuring over seventy special "architectural landscapes".

One-room wooden or stone houses for shepherds are still in use. There are special Slovene peasant fortifications from the 15th century and rural churches all over the country and these have become symbols. Almost every type of rural architecture present in Europe can be found in the different regions of Slovenia, often with local, regional or national variations but still maintaining the European character.

This is the real value of rural architecture in Europe: to be original and European at the same time. If we are to sustain and extend our interest in the countryside and in our rural architectural heritage and if we are to build upon it, we must also protect a common recognition of the past.

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An appeal on behalf of wild and domestic animals and plants

A plea for consideration to be given to animal and plant life in integrated planning policies

What would the countryside be without the animal and plant species which bring it alive? As an integral part of the great theatre of life, they give our natural, cultural and landscape heritage its richness.

Yet many scientific reports and statistics regularly ring alarm bells and tell us that biological diversity is being eroded. On the subject of farm animals particularly, a recent report by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) stated among other things that, without appropriate action, more than 2 200 domestic breeds could become extinct throughout the world in the next 20 years.

What can be done to reverse this trend ? Steps must be taken to:

- constantly inform, educate and raise awareness among the public and decision-makers about the importance and value of this living heritage;
- strengthen the institutional framework and planning systems in order to make biological diversity part of national strategies and action plans;
- carry out a strategic assessment of the potential impact of sectoral policies (town and country planning, agriculture, fishing, transport, forestry, through a comprehensive strategy) on biodiversity, and take this fully into account in those sectoral policies;
- involve all relevant sectors in the conservation process and ensure that they live up to their own responsibility for solving problems;
- enforce existing legal instruments at both national and international levels, and promote stronger laws in areas not yet sufficiently covered;
- ensure that local and traditional knowledge about agricultural biological diversity is preserved.

We have a great responsibility: to be vigilant and careful and to conserve the wonderful heritage we have been given. The extinction of a species is irreversible: each one is unique and irreplaceable. The protection of species should be given the same amount of attention as a work of art.

An important step was taken with the adoption of the “Guiding Principles for the Sustainable Spatial Development of the European Continent” in Hannover on 8 September 2000, at the 12th session of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning from the member states of the Council of Europe (CEMAT). The principles fully integrate the objective of “enhancing and protecting natural resources and the natural heritage” and recognise that natural resources contribute not only to balanced ecosystems, but also to the attractiveness of regions, their recreational value and general quality of life.

These assets must therefore be protected and enhanced and both the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (1979) and the Pan-european Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS) (1996) must be taken into account in an integrated planning policy.

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The rural heritage as a main factor for development

The multifunctionality of landscapes in rural areas in Austria

Landscapes are increasingly perceived as complex entities, not only from a bio-physical point of view, but also from social, economic and political perspectives. The natural and cultural heritage of Europe finds its expression in the great variety of landscapes typical of Europe on the whole. This was therefore one of the main reasons why the Council of Europe, being aware of the permanent degradation of biological and landscape diversity values in Europe, elaborated the Pan-european Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS) making clear that Europe has a shared responsibility towards conserving its natural heritage and passing it on to future generations.

Austria can be seen as a fine example of how to succeed in maintaining a great variety of natural, semi-natural and cultural landscapes although a lot of problems are to be faced. 67% of the whole surface of 83 850 km² are mountainous regions in Austria, most of them belonging to the eastern Alps, plains being concentrated in the eastern and northern parts of the country. Lovely lakes like the "Bodensee" in the far west and the "Neusiedler See" in the far east of Austria, important rivers like the famous blue Danube contrast with the strange shapes of the Silvretta, Hohe Tauern or Ötztal mountains. Other characteristic landscapes are for instance vineyards, extensive forests and alpine meadows. But there are also the industrial and urban areas, the motor-highways connecting east and west, south and north Europe, the skiing-resorts and the hydro-electric powerplants.

Examples for multifunctions

Agriculture

A total surface of 3 412 000 hectares are farmland. Farming is an economic activity involving the processing of natural resources into agricultural products. Traditional farming is of the utmost importance for biodiversity as the diversity of wild species and the diversity of domestic species often needs farming activities. Of course, especially from the 1950s to the 1970s, agriculture caused a serious degradation of soils, bogs and marshlands, dry heaths and other important habitats in Austria as well as in other European countries. But nowadays agriculture is one of the most important partners for nature conservation and helps to maintain biological and landscape diversity in close co-operation with public administration and landowners. Furthermore a high percentage of Austrian farmers opted for biological agriculture and it was a former minister for agriculture, Josef Riegler, who developed the idea of "*ökosoziale Agrarpolitik*", a policy of agriculture taking into account ecological and social responsibilities! By the way this would have been a fine strategy to avoid the BSE catastrophe and other threats to mankind caused by agro-industry.

Sustainable agriculture allows for the development of multifunctionality in the landscape. Pastureland, gardens and hedges, etc., not only have the function of agricultural

production, but also maintain biodiversity and a beautiful landscape which is more and more sought after by tourists for recreational purposes and sporting activities. One of the reasons why there is a very emotional relationship between the true farmer and the landscape he is working in is that many farms have been owned for generations by the same families and they are doing their (often very hard) work with great respect for nature and their homeland. A fact which leads to the cultural aspect: the highly developed diversity of typical regional and local culture in Austria, expressed in music, dances, national dress and customs is an important social link amongst the people. The "small is beautiful" theory of the Austro-british philosopher, Leopold Kohr, also applies to landscape diversity. Contrary to the large agro-industry concerns in some western European countries, there are some 252-110 agricultural production units with an average size of 26,8 hectares in Austria.

Forestry

Austria comprises 3 142 000 hectares of forest and woodland, this means more than one half of Austria's surface: 55,7% are spruce forests, 6,1% pine trees, 9,2% beech and 2% oak tree forests. More than two thirds of Austrian forests are privately owned. Following a recent study by Georg Grabherr, about 66% of Austrian forests can be classified as natural or semi-natural, only 7% are more or less artificial. Sustainable forestry has a very long tradition in Austria, mostly managed by naturalistic silviculture methods.

Although the main function of many Austrian forests is, of course, production of timber, protective functions, recreation and common welfare are mentioned in the Austrian forestry law as of equal importance. A fifth dimension must be added to these four functions: the preservation of forests and woodland as natural habitats for a great number of plant and animal species. The safeguarding of forest biodiversity requires both management measures and respect of forest reserves.

The protective functions (19,9% protective forests in Austria) are of the utmost importance in a mountainous country like Austria. A area of 83 878 km² can be seen as endangered by torrents, 5 395 km² are endangered by avalanches. Avoiding damage to settlements or traffic routes caused by avalanches or floodsheds is an important function ensured by many mountain forests often submitted to special forestry programmes. But the forests do not only play an essential role in watershed management, wooded landscapes also play a major role in preserving freshwater sources, a real treasure.

Following resolution H 2 of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE), a network of natural forest reserves is now being established for biodiversity purposes all over Austria. This started in Salzburg in 1985 to ensure preservation of species and to maintain biodiversity. It should not be forgotten that forests are the habitat of well-known wild animal species like red deer, roe deer, lynx and even the brown bear (a small population of which is living in our northern limestone Alps) as well as rare bird species, lichens, and fungi. So landscapes covered by forests fulfil multifunctions in a very typical way and they are essential for rural development .

Tourism

Austria can offer a variety of beautiful natural and cultural landscapes. Among the sites drawing the greatest number of visitors are the famous Schönbrunn castle in Vienna and the Krimml Falls in Salzburg which received a Council of Europe award. The importance of winter tourism is increasing, too, but skiing depends on adequate landscapes! 3 300 cable cars and ski-lifts are in operation in Austria during wintertime. There are approximately 22 000 km of skiing slopes, some of them however represent a serious problem for the protection of landscapes. On the other hand the importance of summer tourism is increasing too. About 10 000 km of biking routes enable bikers to reach the most beautiful landscapes all over Austria. Among the positive effects of tourism are the creation of jobs and income, promotion of intercultural relations and the possibility of recreation for the stressed urban citizen. Its negative consequences are ever-increasing traffic, over-exploitation of natural resources and generally inappropriate use of landscapes. Due to this, tourism sometimes endangers the sole grounds for its existence. Avoiding exploitation, increasing intensity of traffic and pollution of landscapes is one of the main tasks for the future. We should be aware that tourism depends on landscape and that rural development in many parts of the country depends on tourism.

Nature conservation

More than 160 Natura 2000 sites (some 16% of the surface of Austria), 64 biogenetic reserves, 10 Ramsar sites and 5 biosphere reserves indicate the high ecological value of Austrian landscapes. And there are hundreds of additional nature reserves, protected landscapes and nature monuments including 5 national parks and 2 European diploma award areas. In Austria the 9 federal states are fully responsible for nature conservation and landscape protection – in legislation as well as in administration. In the past, nature conservation had been merely focused on the protection of plant and animal species, on nature monuments and some outstanding landscapes. But today additional needs have led to a close partnership with forest and agricultural landowners, NGOs and communities. This collaboration includes financial instruments which encourage sustainable management, restoration of deteriorated habitats and landscape planning taking into account the skills and knowledge of local populations. In many cases transboundary co-operation has been developed with our neighbouring countries and there are the first transfrontier protected areas like Neusiedlersee national park/Fertöd (Burgenland-Hungary), Thayatal national park (Lower Austria-Czech Republic) or the largest protected zone in Europe : Hohe Tauern national park (Carinthia-Salzburg-Tyrol) together with Rieserferner nature park (Southern Tyrol/Italy).

Spatial planning

Sustainable use of space should be the main objective of spatial planning. A high quality legislation has been developed for this purpose in Austria. But a legal act is useless, if political decision makers are not aware of the results of decisions causing functional and aesthetic erosion of landscapes. Are people aware that, for instance, 25 hectares of forests and farmland disappear every week for the sake of new construction (roads,

houses, industries)? A lack of long term perspectives leads directly to fragmentation, vanishing identity and loss of multifunctionality of landscapes. The lack of efficiency in spatial planning endangers the value of cultural and natural landscapes as well.

Alpine Convention

The Alpine Convention was signed in 1991 in Salzburg. Contracting parties are the European Union, France, Italy, Monaco, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Germany, Slovenia and Austria. It gives a good example of how to tackle the problem of combining conflicting economic and ecological needs in a more holistic perspective. It calls for the setting up of concrete actions in the field of diverse sectoral policies, e.g. nature conservation and protection of landscapes, agriculture, mountain forestry, tourism, energy and traffic, taking into account ecological and socio-economic aspects.

Protection of endangered ecosystems, sustainable use of natural resources and avoiding threats caused by increasing traffic and other impacts are among the main objectives of this Convention. It, too, provides a framework for sustainable socio-economic development respecting the interests of the inhabitants of the alpine region as well as the needs of fragile nature trying to ensure the conservation of the unique alpine biological and landscape diversity. So it could (and should) be a good example for further regional conventions in mountain regions of Europe.

Summary

The great variety of beautiful landscapes in Austria offers many different aspects of multifunctionality. The same landscape may have productive, protective, recreational and ecological functions. Increasing fragmentation and traffic congestion are among the foremost threats. The protection and sustainable development of landscapes has to be a joint task for spatial planning, agriculture, forestry, nature conservation and tourism as a whole in order to maintain the multifunctionality and diversity of our landscapes.

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Gastronomy – The Regional Culinary Heritage network

The Regional Culinary Heritage network promotes and develops regional dishes and ingredients. The project was launched in 1995 by the southeast Skåne and Bornholm cross-border co-operation. In 1997, Carrefour South Sweden was charged by the European Commission to initiate a pilot project to develop a regional food network throughout the European Union. Today, the European Regional Culinary Heritage network is a self-financed European network for EU and non-EU countries.

Background

The Culinary Heritage concept was created in 1994, as part of the cross-border co-operation between southeast Skåne, Sweden and the Danish island of Bornholm. Restaurateurs, small-scale food producers and regional food industries joined a regional network to promote local cuisine. A logo was produced and displayed by member organisations as a sign of quality for traditional and new food creations that were based on regional ingredients and raw materials.

In 1996 the concept was introduced to the four regions of the Four Corners Co-operation: the island of Rügen in Germany, Bornholm, the Swinoujście region in Poland and southeast Skåne. When other rural regions in Europe learned of this initiative, Carrefour South Sweden was asked to expand the network on a European level and the European Commission and Region Skåne agreed to jointly finance the establishment of the European Regional Culinary Heritage network. After a three-year establishment period, which ended in 2000, the administration of the network became self-financing.

Since its humble beginnings, the network has grown and now includes 36 European regions representing most of the countries of Europe. Today the network has members in Greece, Spain, France, United Kingdom, Ireland, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden.

The Culinary Heritage network

The network comprises a number of regional networks; these include producers, restaurateurs and regional food industries. A regional project manager coordinates all local activities. New regions that wish to apply for full membership of the European network are enrolled as candidate regions. Candidate regions are required to participate in a training course and establish a network of suitable businesses in their own region. Once they have complied with the entrance requirements, they are admitted as full members. Membership rules, which include criteria for participating businesses and regions, logotype usage and organisational recommendations, ensure that the network maintains the agreed and approved standards.

The European Culinary Heritage network has many dimensions and members, these include agriculture, regional and rural development, tourism, culture, SMEs, information

technology, inter-regional exchanges, businesses, other organisations and the citizens of Europe.

Food, lifestyle and culture

Perhaps one of the most important dimensions is that the concept aims at highlighting the differences in our culinary heritage. Food is not only nutrition, it is a central part of our lifestyle and culture. A study of the culinary heritage of a region will tell us much about its history and culture. We will learn about raw materials and the production of ingredients. We will see how skilled chefs use traditional cooking methods and apply gastronomic developments to make the consumer more interested in what he is eating. With this knowledge, the consumer is more likely to ask for those ingredients and dishes that have a regional link.

The Culinary Heritage concept embodies many of the central issues of regional development. Many years ago, the industrial revolution encouraged people to migrate to the cities and industrial regions of Europe, a trend that has continued into our times. Today, many rural areas of Europe are faced with depopulation problems and diminishing job opportunities. Together with national and regional authorities, the European Union is working hard to find and create new job opportunities in rural areas where food production was once a major source of income. The Culinary Heritage concept can play an important role in this work by helping to focus interest on new opportunities, develop new business ideas and promote the strengths and unique characteristics of the regions.

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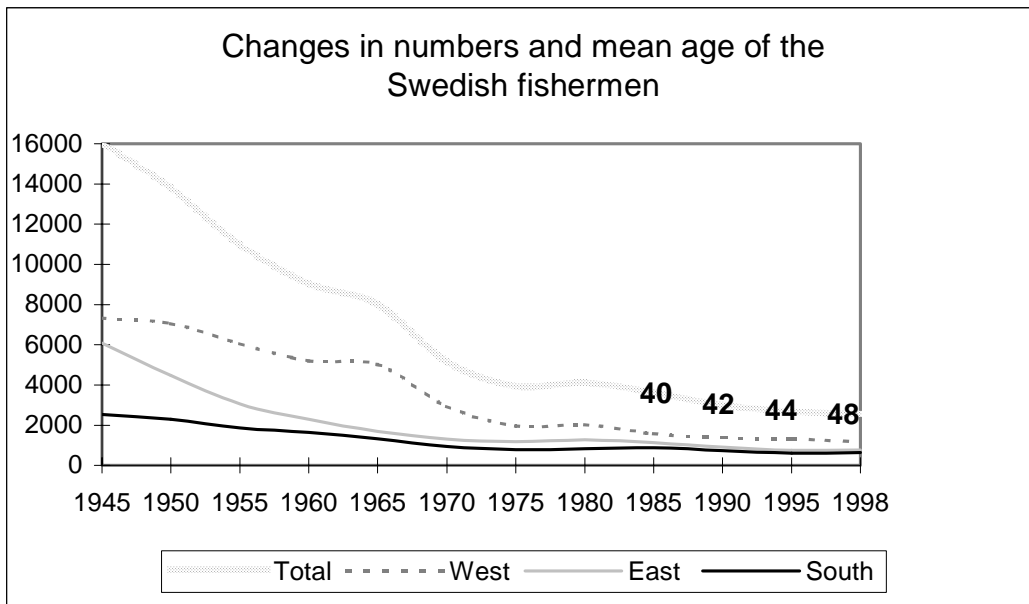
Loss and revitalisation of local knowledge in the Swedish archipelago fisheries

Fewer and elderly fishermen – this is, briefly formulated, the main trend in inshore fishery activity in Sweden, as in most other European countries. From the times – less than 100 years ago in Sweden – that “fishing community” was nearly synonymous with “coastal society” to the present days when fishery is marginal, both in national, economic and social terms, a dramatic change has happened, usually called modernisation.

Traditionally the specific coastal culture and society of the archipelago landscape, characteristic of Swedish coasts, was closely connected to the local ecosystems including the sea, the coast and the land. Today the Swedish archipelago areas are discussed mainly in terms of negative demographic growth with real estate being appropriated by people from urban areas and temporary overcrowding by tourists – indicators of cultural, social, economic and ecological impoverishment and decline.

Swedish rural and environmental development policies address the questions of keeping alive the archipelago. In this context coastal fisheries can be expected to play a significant role in rebuilding the local society of the future.

A society capable of sustaining a diversity of livelihoods and producers having control over the natural assets of local areas. However, the protagonists of such local economies, as for example fishermen are mostly old and few.



The social structures and the “locales” (in the sociological sense of “places filled with cultural values and social significance”) that have historically supported the reproduction of local knowledge are still there in many rural areas, but have lost their function. These

are symbolised in the church, the family circle, the community work. In fishing communities too, the "fiskelag" (crews of 10-20 men), the local landing harbour and the fish auctions have been such structures of knowledge reproduction. These meeting places have been platforms of social communication and the transfer of knowledge and skills from one generation to the next in manifold forms of everyday communication, for example, during work and at home, by telling stories or singing songs, and thus formed part of the reproduction pattern of the local coastal society.

Fishing in rural areas was a part of two holistic units - the household that was an autonomous social and economic system of its own kind, and the local community. Nobody was a fisherman only but took part in a series of gender specific, productive, reproductive and community life activities. The combination of fishing with agriculture, horticulture, forestry, cattle rearing, house construction, transporting and workshops was very common in the archipelago rural families. The coastal fishery of the Swedish west coast, for a long time dominated by the herring fishery, was the outstanding feature of this holistic and sustainable local economy as fish was the specific resource of a coastal economy.

As long as this local economy was not eroded through pressure for economic efficiency, technical progress and advanced professional specialisation, the recruitment of young people into this way of life worked well. The processes of modernisation that have contributed to the dysfunction and disintegration of such structures are mainly related to the combined processes of industrialisation and urbanisation of mainstream society. Problems of history, power and culture in local systems are no longer addressed adequately in this mainstream development.

To revitalise local knowledge one must learn from the original settings (where and how the knowledge was transmitted, why and under which conditions local knowledge worked, and what were its advantages and limits). However, traditional social settings and cultures that have been dissolved cannot be recreated, only similar systems can be developed anew. The challenge is then to create new and alternative structures that allow revitalisation rather than conserving traditions in museums. In museums local knowledge is not used but becomes, under optimal circumstances, part of a collective and cultural memory, under the worst circumstances, an idyllic cultural relic. The revitalisation of local knowledge may occur, however, when older knowledge is rediscovered and still existing forms of local knowledge are re-evaluated. A re-evaluation of archipelago fishing folk knowledge in terms of ecological knowledge can be a premise for sustainable development in these rural areas.

What can be done to revitalise local knowledge in the Swedish archipelagos?

A move can be made to:

- combine local with scientific knowledge for the purpose of strengthening both;
- use it for the purpose of protecting and managing local resources and biodiversity;

- adapt local knowledge to the changing forms of family and community life, the changing gender relations, etc.;
- develop gender roles so that men and women can participate in integrated and local diversified production systems;
- reform formal institutions to allow for new forms of pluri-activity;
- learn from the results of cultural-anthropological research with its focus on local knowledge (also the lesson that globalisation is not the final end to traditional and local knowledge and culture);
- create islands of projects and experiments with local knowledge to take the advantage of diversity of knowledge (for example, in organic agriculture and horticulture, local handicrafts, sustainable and high quality local fisheries, new consumption styles).

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Oral traditions and the rural world

Oral traditions such as stories, music and languages are important elements in the rural world. Gipsy lore is an illustration of this.

At the beginning of the 21st century, in the frame of a post-modern and post-industrial civilisation and in the clutch of cultural mutations, the emerging Roma identity cannot do anything other than link itself to present day society norms. These provide the only access without discrimination to the logistics, information and financial resources necessary to full civic, social and political citizenship and to equal dignity.

The ascent of Islam and the collapse of the Persian and Byzantine empires pushed various oriental ethnic groups into Europe, among these were the Roma/Gypsies. They drew their different names from the people that they came into contact with, names such as "Arami" (Armenians, pagans), "Faraontseg" (crowd), "Bohemians" (from Bohemia), "Tartars", "Gypsies" (Egyptians), "Saracens" (Arabs), "Athinganoi" (Tziganes). This last name derived from "Cingar", a hypothetical Hindo-Aric population, and afterwards took the meaning of "pagan", "untouchable", relating to the Athinganoi heresy of Cathar origin, historically it defined the Roma ethnic community. The ethnonym "Roma" (from the Greek term "Rhomaïos", denomination for the inhabitants of the Roman Empire and for the christians of Byzance until the collapse of the Empire) used with "Sinto" (the Roma from the Germanic area) and "Kalo" (the Roma from the Hispanic region) defines a transfrontier ethnic community with its own language and culture.

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National heritage policies: examples

Training and employment: the keys to rural development in Spain

In 1985 the Ministry of Works and National Health Service started, through the National Institute of Employment, very interesting training and employment programmes promoted by autonomous and local administrations or by associations of general interest and charities which were directly responsible for the projects. They were called "*Escuelas Taller*" (workshop schools), "*Casas de Oficios*" (training trade houses) and nowadays "*Talleres de Empleo*" (employment workshops). They have common objectives, although there are slight differences in the time of implementation, and in the groups of people to whom they are destined.

Briefly they are programmes of great occupational absorption launched in a quite unfavourable socio-economic situation, showing an almost continuous increase in the figures of youth unemployment and of first time job seekers. Another objective to highlight in this programme is the training. These temporary schools offer a very important theoretical complement, mainly on the trained job, although the practical aim of the project is evidently to strengthen the trade skills of the participant students. However this practical side usually facilitates the carrying out of real work such as architectural restorations and improvement of natural spaces. These facts create general social interest because the improvements are related to the heritage and also the student workers are stimulated by the tangible results achieved. Furthermore traditional occupations are recovered, the most immediate economy in the area of application of the programme is stimulated, the intrinsic values of the territory are reinforced, etc. Many achievements can be attained in the same project, which is based on employment and youth training, as well as on greater enhancement of the cultural heritage.

The Albarracín example

This is a development project with many possibilities and if it is applied with a mind to the future, it can even contribute to the saving of a territory. Albarracín is a clear example. This Aragonese town constitutes one of the most surprising groups of historic interest in Spain. In spite of its scarce population, it has a great historical importance in the country nowadays. In this city two consecutive programmes of "*Escuelas Taller*" (workshop schools) were developed leading to the establishment of the "*Fundación Santa María de Albarracín*", becoming a model of heritage preservation in the handling of its legacy and in its cultural launching, overcoming the mere tourist exploitation.

The clearest results are the reduction in the emigration of young people and the economic activity of the city. Young people were given an economic alternative, related to the heritage, which allowed their establishment in the town, creating their own companies. All this in a context of cultural reinforcement enhanced the economic activity of Albarracín, making its economic stability possible and at the same time preserving its heritage. Culture and heritage are the keys of the project already considered by the programmes of the "*Escuelas Taller*".

In rural areas, the strengthening of youth training is vital, always taking the resources of the specific area into consideration. Nevertheless, if we want to speak of a steady future and not of short-term results, we should also keep in mind a global strengthening of the town and of the area to consolidate the jobs already created and to justify the parallel heritage restoration. The training and employment programmes supported by the National Institute of Employment in Spain have made this possible in different rural and also urban areas of the country. These projects have to be seriously considered in relation to rural development.

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Viewpoints

The rural heritage – a natural and cultural asset

The rural heritage, a natural merging of nature and culture, is a relatively new concept in Europe, barely a few decades old. But it is only in recent years that a dynamic, comprehensive approach, both scientific and political, has come to the fore in this area. In the recent words of journalist Ali Habib, “a more heritage-centred view incorporating the economic, environmental and social dimensions” has at last established itself in the thinking of those most closely concerned, who are producers and managers in the agricultural and rural sector. The latter and European policy-makers have finally grasped the idea of mobilisation at every level, from the local community to national government and international bodies, around the rural heritage as a tool for enhancement and local development.

It would appear that the natural and cultural heritage have always been inseparable features in rural communities. Yet it has to be recognised that the logic behind each of them is entirely different and that they are based on approaches which have nothing in common, although they can and must be reconciled and combined. The logic underlying the natural heritage is that of the natural sciences, which have been extensively influenced by the rise of the ecology movement. As for the elements making up the cultural heritage, which are manufactured by humans and shaped and often gradually modified by rural communities interacting with the natural environment, they are analysed and defined in terms of human sciences. The present challenge is to harness this dual legacy to the needs of active conservation and the development of what are termed man-made systems.

More than any other sector of society, rural communities are obliged to make a constant effort to manage and preserve their environment in order to avert the risk of deterioration and desertification. Recent natural disasters have amply demonstrated this risk, which exists for all constituent parts of the rural heritage.

There are several basic features of the rural heritage which must define the way it is managed and taught. Rural space presents an infinite variety of observable forms, objects and scales, whether it is a matter of landscapes, cultural micro-regions, architectural forms or some other feature.

Constituent elements of the rural heritage

The constituent elements – from natural objects to skills, techniques, means of communication and social ideals – vary enormously. Action and observation must be adapted to this heterogeneity.

The changes affecting the rural heritage are part of a complex and never-ending process which is continually marked by disappearance and innovation. Observation and action also need to take account of this factor which often takes on an urgent quality.

A collective identity

Lastly, by definition, heritage property – especially that which makes up the rural heritage – is closely linked with the collective identity. People identify with it individually and collectively, regarding it a meaningful reminder of their past and a valuable asset for their future.

Knowledge and action in the rural heritage sector are based on many different rationales: the empiricism of farmers, the rationalism of technical experts and economists, the profit motive of the predominantly market-led society, concern about the period of crisis and transition which we are currently experiencing and, finally, the specific rationale underlying heritage activity. In our view, it is the last of these which must guide the rediscovery and co-ordinated exploitation of a rural heritage finally considered in its entirety.

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Enhancement of the cultural and natural heritage in Poland

The natural heritage has been protected in Poland for many years, but the notion of rural cultural heritage as covering everything produced by humankind, particularly agro-pastoral landscapes, is a relatively recent one. The move from protection to enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage is made as soon as the question of rural development is raised, in terms of a qualitative challenge: what sort of development is wanted and desirable? What products and services peculiar to the Polish countryside should be promoted? This question is even more relevant now that Poland is about to join the European Union.

The “Green Lungs of Poland”

A highly suitable region for sustainable development

This area, described as an eco-region, was set aside in 1989 following pressure from a pro-nature lobby to preserve vast areas in the north east of the country that are remarkable for their landscapes and geo-morphological features (primary forests, marshland, lakes) as well as for their wealth of fauna and flora. It covers 18% of the country's surface area, and 9% of the population live there. The main target it has set itself is to encourage sustainable development: to give priority to approaches to development that are compatible with nature conservation, to develop tourism and integrated or organic farming and to take account of and preserve the cultural pluralism deriving from the unusual history of this outlying part of the country. This project, which was made official by an agreement between the regional assemblies in 1990 and approved by the Diet in 1995, has once again been submitted for ratification to the new authorities set up following the territorial reform of 2000. This essentially rural region was relatively underdeveloped under the socialist regime and has continued to be so since democratisation.

Humankind's place in the natural heritage

The profusion of vast ecosystems that have remained in a natural or near natural state because there has been little human activity has made for an approach to heritage focusing on nature, the objectives of which are conservation, scientific research and, subject to a number of reservations, discovering nature as a recreational activity. Today, however, human beings are increasingly present in these regions. Their presence is a threat that it has been necessary to harness and control since tourism became essential to development; but it is also an asset, bringing in its wake growing numbers of agro-touristic amenities. Several “chambers of agro-tourism” and a National Federation of Rural Tourism have been set up.

Human beings are also beginning to be seen as inevitable protagonists in ecosystems and landscapes, in regions where farming activities are slowing down or dying out. But in a context where the future of agriculture and smallholders is one of the main challenges facing the rural world, agro-environmental policies can only be implemented with European Union support. The national parks in the flood valleys and wetlands of the

Biebrza and Narew Rivers in Podlasie, ecosystems reputed throughout the world for their wide variety of bird life, have been changing and deteriorating since wetland grazing ceased there: the reintroduction of this activity is now being considered.

From the natural heritage to the cultural heritage

The forms of the villages and the styles of the buildings and cultural property are both traces of the past and the Prussian, Austrian and Russian occupations, and signs of the diversity of the present inhabitants. As traditional peasant farming survived under the socialist regime and development has been kept at bay until now, these regions have preserved a particularly rich and diversified cultural heritage: wooden houses and churches, crafts and embroidery, folk and religious music and festivals, local food-processing and culinary skills, and so on.

These living vestiges of the traditions preserved out of necessity and as a result of people's determination to retain their identity during the socialist era are in danger of being rejected and disappearing as the countryside empties and in a free market-oriented society seeking progress and prosperity. Polish rural society is therefore at a delicate turning point. It is because an approach geared to local sustainable development is starting to be taken that this natural and cultural heritage is beginning to be seen as a source of impetus. This approach to heritage today is rooted in regions that have rediscovered a sense of identity: the little homelands.

Enhancement initiatives and the approach followed

Initiatives of the eco-museum type are becoming increasingly common. Other, more original ideas are coming to light, such as the "Kurpie archaeological workshops", which offer a tourist route and events on several sites, and the "folk crafts route" in Podlasie to save and foster craft skills in danger of dying out. The Foundation for Rural Development, which supports numerous agro-tourism projects in Poland, also strives to get them included in the cultural heritage.

The key issue is to co-ordinate enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage, "sustainable" social and economic development and regional initiatives and projects. This is the target that the experimental scheme "Region, People, Products", launched by the "Green Lungs of Poland" office and supported by several French bodies, has set itself in regions of widely varying culture, ecology and history.

The approach begins by fostering an awareness of and enhancing local identities, assets and resources: this involves making inquiries and then setting up a stand at a local fair to make the scheme's ideas known. Then local seminars on "cultural identity" are held for local elected representatives, farmers and tourism, nature and culture professionals. Such seminars have enabled the Kurps of Myszyńiec, a forested peasant farming region with folk and craft traditions, to make contact with the Mazurs of Milki in the great lakes region; the inhabitants of Grodek, a region of forests on the frontier with Belarus

characterised by its lively, mostly Orthodox customs, to meet those of Narew, who live on the banks of the marshy meanders of the great river.

Apart from the work done on the various aspects of regional identity, the aim is to encourage collective approaches. In Poland, where any reference to collectivism is considered suspicious, it is necessary to go back to square one. So-called “initiative groups” have therefore been set up, informal bodies which bring together interested persons, project leaders and mayors. In Milki, an agro-tourism association has been set up in order to enhance the Mazur identity and local heritage, develop self-catering cottages, cultural and sporting activities and tourist facilities and promote local farm produce.

The aim of the approach taken by the “Regions, People, Products” scheme to enhance the local natural and cultural heritage is to seek economic spin-offs that will enable local populations to stay put. This involves creating an image of a region where “nature” abounds and one that is unpolluted and has a wealth of tradition and skills. This image gives a boost to all efforts to develop rural tourism by the municipalities of Milki or Grodek, and by the associations of municipalities, known as the “little homelands”, of the regions of Kurpie and the Upper Narew. It is also designed to promote local produce, such as Kurpie honey, the milk of the Upper Suprasl area around Grodek and the bitter gherkins of the Upper Narew. Furthermore, labels guaranteeing the origin and quality of produce are being introduced in readiness for integration into a Europe rich in diversity and local flavour.

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International instruments

International organisations

The European Union's rural development policy

Protecting our heritage

As Europeans we share a common heritage, which shapes our cultural and national identities, our sense of history, our relationship to the land and natural resources we regard as our birthright. Perhaps one of the most vital and also most endangered aspects of our heritage is the rural environment we share, increasingly threatened over the past century by the ever-lengthening shadow of urban influences and agricultural exploitation. The European Union's new rural development policy intends to harmonise agricultural activities and methods with the environment that makes this possible. The European Union seeks to reconcile conservation and development on the one hand to maintain production and on the other to preserve the natural resources we inherited.

The Cork Declaration – “A living countryside”

As far back as 1996, the European Conference on Rural Development which took place in Cork, Ireland, resulted in a ten point rural development programme for the European Union. The rural development policy delineated within conveys the European Union's recognition of the vital link between rural development and the successful preservation of the national and cultural heritage we bequeath unto subsequent generations.

The Conference was a milestone as it clearly outlined its aims towards rural and cultural enhancement. It acknowledged that rural areas - which contain a quarter of the population and 80% of the territory of the European Union - interweave unique cultural, economic and social aspects to inspire a plethora of viable activities and a range of natural landscapes – forests and farmlands, unspoiled natural sites, villages and regional crafts and industries. It portrayed the immediacy of rural problems, a communal “living countryside” on borrowed time, slowly asphyxiating from over-development, exploitation and neglect.

The European Union recognises that agricultural land and forests, which shape European landscapes, cover the majority of rural Europe. The Cork Conference allowed the EU to outline its hopes to ensure that agriculture remains a major interface between people and the environment, and that farmers fulfil their duty as stewards of many of the natural resources of the countryside, our national and cultural heritage.

The Cork Declaration was significant in relation to the preservation of our natural heritage, as it conveyed that public financial support for rural development, combined with the maintenance of our natural resources, of biodiversity and cultural landscapes, is increasingly gaining acceptance. Indeed, society insists upon it.

European Union policy: reform of the CAP

Perhaps the most significant reform of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy over the past decade was the historic Agenda 2000 reform. This has enabled our agricultural sector to contend with growing concerns about our environment, animal welfare and food safety, as well as with our national and cultural heritage. The new CAP was created to facilitate farmers in their role of providing a range of public services, the most important of which is, of course, the production of quality output with respect to our environment. This revised approach to farming which aims to improve competition and promote sustainable farming, is the underlying tenet of the reform of the CAP in the coming years. The CAP recognises the multifunctional role of modern farmers, which embraces not only food production but also protection of the environment, the enrichment of our respective national rural and cultural heritages, the maintenance of a vital rural sector.

Practical steps to protect our heritage

The Agenda 2000 reforms have provided the CAP with several new tools to encourage environmentally friendly farming. Firstly, member states are compelled to outline minimum environmental standards, to be met by all farmers. If farmers fail to comply with these high standards, they can be sanctioned via the reduction or withdrawal of direct farm aids. Agenda 2000 has made agri-environmental measures the only required element of member states' rural development programmes. Agri-environmental efforts now comprise roughly half of rural development expenditure, clearly a very positive sign.

One measure taken by the EU to contribute to the safeguarding of our national and cultural heritage is the conversion of exploitations into organic farms. The number of organic farms in the EU has increased twofold since 1992 to include over 125 000 farms. Italy has been the most productive in promoting organic farming, which covers 5% of their agricultural area, in comparison with the EU average of 2%.

Ensuring full and continual land use in all areas of the EU is vital for the maintenance of environmentally valuable landscapes. To this end, Agenda 2000 predicts additional aids – 25 to 200 euros per hectare – for farmers in less-favoured areas such as highlands. Agenda 2000 has also introduced 'modulation', which allows member states to reduce the direct payments for large farms by up to 20% and to spend it instead on additional rural development measures.

"Leader+" is the new Community initiative for developing the skills of local people in rural communities, an essential step as the provision of basic services for rural economies and populations will help strengthen and maintain a rural heritage threatened by urban dominance.

Training initiatives, which emphasise the promotion of quality products using environmentally friendly production methods, have been offered to any person involved in agricultural activities. Training is also available to instruct foresters in activities that

aim to improve the ecological and economic nature of our national forests. Indeed the measure has been tendered to all involved in agricultural pursuits and their restructuring.

Rural development programmes include many steps to safeguard our national and cultural heritage, one example being support for afforestation, because the European Union recognises that the future of Europe's cultural and environmental heritage is closely linked to a balanced development of rural areas, which account for 80% of European territory. Our policy brings this to the fore, supporting an environmentally friendly European agricultural sector, which will protect our cultural heritage for the generations to come.

Our living legacy

Above all, the European Union aims to promote rural development policies which sustain the quality and amenity of Europe's rural landscapes (natural resources, biodiversity and cultural identity), so that their use by today's generation does not prejudice the options for future generations. In our local actions, we must take into consideration our global responsibilities, our national and cultural heritage and the legacy we leave.

Franz Fischler

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Council of Europe action in the rural heritage sector

Recommendation on the protection and enhancement of the rural architectural heritage

Following on from the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada, 1985), the Council of Europe produced a significant number of reference texts in the late 1980s offering its member governments pointers and guidelines for implementing comprehensive heritage policies. The subjects covered included public areas, the technical and industrial heritage, 20th century architecture, the prevention of damage caused by pollution or natural disasters, the preservation of traditional skills and crafts for the upkeep of the heritage and the protection of the archaeological heritage in connection with regional development and major infrastructure projects.

Committee of Ministers recommendation No R (89) 6 to member states on the protection and enhancement of the rural architectural heritage is aimed more specifically at the areas affected by the substantial economic changes that gathered pace in the second half of the 20th century, in part because of the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy.

The recommendation brings together the results of a series of conferences held in various European countries and is also based on work by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. On the threshold of the 1990s, it made a major contribution to growing awareness, which has since been intensified still further, of cultural and human values relating to the countryside that go beyond the operation of the agricultural market. The recommendation pursues four objectives. The first is the identification and understanding of the rural heritage through the development of inventory tools employing a multidisciplinary approach in which historical criteria and architectural typologies are combined with ethnological, social and economic data. The second is the incorporation of rural heritage preservation measures in the physical planning process, in line with the Granada Convention itself and also as part of a comprehensive approach to the enhancement of the environment. In particular, the reference to promoting contemporary architecture based on the characteristics of traditional local architecture remains as topical as ever today.

The same is true of the third part of the recommendation concerning the role of the heritage in local development. This section underlines the need for a public strategy for preserving the heritage that also seeks to create employment. Since the time when the recommendation was drafted, discussion in this area has expanded considerably around the issues of sustainable development, the diversification of tourism policies and the rural economy. In this connection, it is clear that efforts to enhance the heritage can succeed only if all sectors are involved and the various approaches are pooled so that contradictions likely to undermine the preservation of resources can be avoided. From this point of view, the preservation of the cultural and the natural heritage are one and the same thing and cannot be achieved through activities that are too compartmentalised. The issues raised by the Council of Europe's work have been disseminated widely

through local associations and initiatives. They are now being reflected in the debate about globalisation and international trade.

The fourth section of the recommendation concerns training and raising awareness of the values of the rural heritage. This involves not only making the public and young people aware of the heritage dimension, a task that concerns all aspects of the heritage, but also, and above all, where the vernacular heritage is concerned, promoting knowledge of traditional techniques and materials. The recommendation calls for interregional activities within the context of the Council of Europe's Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation, this being all the more appropriate since vernacular architecture displays many common features throughout Europe.

Heritage and the local dimension: new challenges

In 2000, the Council of Europe's Cultural Heritage committee began a forward-looking study on "The role of heritage in a changing Europe." In this connection, the heritage issue was tackled from the angle of the global development of a networked economy and the information society.

The networked society that is developing with the aid of digital tools derives most of its wealth from human resources and the management of knowledge and skills. In this new economic equation, where traditional raw materials and sources of energy are less important than the human factor, the role of local areas in relation to global networks may well actually be strengthened. By way of example, the practice of "geo-referencing" and geographical information systems (GIS) could highlight the cultural and natural heritage resources of particular regions and enable tourism and other activities to be distributed more effectively. The "local dimension" could therefore in future both meet people's need for roots and social ties that foster a sense of identity, and also help strengthen the position of regions in the global economy.

It goes without saying that computer technology is only one of the tools in an overall process linked to a reorganisation of work and the global economy, whose effects are neither always fully understood nor, above all, properly controlled at present.

While the regional heritage is an essential resource that will increasingly make an ongoing contribution to the information, multimedia and leisure industries, there is a risk of a deepening divide between regions and social groups that benefit from the impact of the new economy and those that are excluded from it. Abuses and manipulation detrimental to the proper conservation of the cultural heritage may also develop as a result of overexploitation of resources for the sake of quick profits. Like UNESCO, which has launched a debate on the ethics of the information society, the Council of Europe is a body where efforts should continue to be made to develop ethical principles and devise strategies for preserving aspects of a "common good of public interest" that must not be left in its entirety to market mechanisms alone. In this connection, whether we are talking about the principles of sustainable regional development or the

development in Europe of a society organised around knowledge and creativity, the issues are the same.

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"Europe, a common heritage" campaign

The campaign has defined the possible scenarios for heritage practices, as the case of rural heritage, echoing how heritage represents us as Europeans in a framework of regenerating common values. The campaign has also addressed the issue of the social and cultural forms through which we can today develop an awareness of this common heritage. The campaign has constituted:

- an observatory for heritage policies: e.g. the Italian Observatory of Landscape Policies (both urban and rural);
- a forum for the exchange of ideas: international conferences to define the new commitment of the vernacular approaches, as well as the results of the international photo competition closely involved in rural landscapes, as a result of contemporary observations of and by Europeans;
- a debate on European society: rural areas and the migration in central and eastern Europe;
- a field for defining the problems and hopes of European co-operation: wooden culture in Europe, transnational project;
- improving knowledge and application of European standards: the European Landscape prize;
- a valorisation of the political strategies of which the heritage is part and parcel: rural planning;
- rural areas as a framework for regional and transfrontier cooperation

The common heritage aims at something larger than the borders and limits of each state: a heritage not limited to territory, which enables us to assume multiple identities and references which will further the fundamental principle of understanding and respect. In this spirit, rural heritage has proven itself as an essential centre of relations, as a landscape of a particular heritage dynamism and as an exceptional contributor to defining the new geography of the European heritage.

The rural environment is defined through a particular way of safeguarding the signs that keep up the history of the landscape. Without a doubt, the rural environment is a register of intelligent use of resources and space through centuries of agricultural development that explains the world in which we live in today's Europe.

The campaign has served to interpret the way in which these values and resources are resituated in the present, beyond the historical sequels that explain the speeding up or slowing down of production of places and rural landscapes, but also beyond monumentalist (large historic complexes in a rural environment) or documentalist approaches (the vernacular and ethnographic). The rural environment is no longer considered as a mere testimony, in many cases a remnant of pre-industrial society. The campaign has confirmed that the rural world is a place of the future.

The rural landscape has been defined as a crossroads rather than in stratigraphic terms; it is the interface in the search for connections. This dimension encourages another kind of classification of rural phenomena, in settings where eco-museums no longer seek to be places of demonstrations but rather spaces for useful life that valorise heritage in terms of cultural and social promotion. Beyond the preservation of economically related architecture, such as roofs, granaries and fences, an attempt has been made to deepen the cultural and technical dialogue of the living traditions, and to increase conscience of our responsibility in defining a possible future for the countryside.

Castles, monasteries, manors and other forms of “major heritage” in the rural context have been matched by sustainable village projects, as shown by the “laureate” of the European Landscape prize in the NGO category. The rurality of feasts and rituals, of festivals and new forms of art, dance and folk music have without a doubt contributed to making future generations the guardians as well as the direct beneficiaries of this heritage. The message of the campaign has been particularly well disseminated through this kind of event, as the national committees have confirmed. These new forms of conviviality in a rural environment strengthen the life of its traditions and provide new resources in interpreting our relationship to territory, giving it new wisdom in order to divulge today the way in which we can safeguard the values and messages of which the rural world is still the custodian. This revitalisation solicits a new kind of reflection that combines the practical and the symbolic in the preservation of a great common European space.

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The role of local and regional authorities in strengthening rural areas

It is an oft-repeated fact that 80% of the European Union's citizens live in urban areas or specifically in towns, which is why particular importance is attached to improving these areas.

But rural areas, which provide the necessities for town-dwellers' survival, require at least as much attention as urban areas. Water, air, food, holiday areas - nature in the broadest sense - are precious assets which can be safeguarded only if rural areas are kept intact, properly looked after and managed.

Amenities needed in rural areas

To continue protecting these assets, the amenities which have been set up and developed in rural areas must be maintained. It is vital to preserve or put in place the facilities and conditions which enable people to live in the countryside, now and in the future: for example, an infrastructure that meets current standards and arrangements for waste disposal and provision of main services, including areas of low population density such as valleys. However, the diversity of European landscapes and the quality of life of their inhabitants are under threat. Globalisation and the changes it brings endanger small entities - precisely those engaged in economic activity that is respectful of the environment.

Individual states and the European Union regularly emphasise the importance of rural areas and support them through a range of measures of varying effectiveness.

Clearly, action instigated by people with responsibility at the local level is always more productive and cost-effective than measures imposed by a central authority, even with the best of intentions. Local and regional authorities should therefore be involved and given the necessary powers. As the right arm of central government, they are the guardians of rural areas, and as autonomous entities they are answerable to the citizens who, at local elections, put their trust in the representatives of the municipality and give them a task to carry out.

Naturally, municipalities must have the requisite powers, sufficient financial resources and an efficient, autonomous administration.

The example of Austria

I cannot imagine that Austria would be so prosperous without its small entities - nine confederate regions and 2 359 municipalities - and I am convinced that our political structure, in which tasks are distributed according to the principle of subsidiarity, contributes substantially to this.

Who knows best what citizens really need, what their expectations are and what problems need to be solved? Who can address priorities most quickly, according to requirements and real needs? The answer, without a doubt, is local councillors, who have been voted into office and will be standing for election again.

Town and country planning, for example, is best dealt with by municipalities, because they will take a responsible approach to managing land that is available in limited quantities. Municipalities are best placed to know whether they need a residential area, an industrial area, a nature reserve or a protected area; they know the vulnerable areas where drinking water sources are located, they know about avalanche zones and how mountain streams behave. Through town and country planning they make decisions about their own future and the financial implications of infrastructure development; they can also avoid problem areas.

Cultural and educational amenities, despite their reduced scale - or precisely because of it - can be organised and supported in a more appropriate way. For example, while each local area in Austria has its own band, this does not mean that there is competition between them but that each is attached to its own identity. Local associations ensure that society functions smoothly and that people live together harmoniously. They are an antidote to loneliness and anonymity. They are conducive to interaction and neighbourly relations.

The meaning of “home”

All these riches and many others besides - which small entities give us - go together to form our home. Home is not just the place where we were born or live, it is the place where we feel at ease and find quality of life. To preserve this precious asset, grand statements are not enough: municipalities must also be empowered to take action, because experience has shown that strong municipalities are the best guarantee for the future. Moreover, the municipality is the political entity which citizens accept most readily, because they feel that it defends their interests in relation to, *inter alia*, central government and the European institutions.

This preference for local government is demonstrated most clearly at election time: European citizens are much more willing to turn out when the authorities they are electing are close to them, and they can therefore observe and evaluate their work.

Günter Pumberger

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Rapporteur on difficulties in agricultural areas and rural development problems

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Tres Serols, Mont Perdu, nature for humans

The Mont Perdu massif in the Pyrenees (3 353m) has been included in the World Heritage list as both a “natural landscape” and a “cultural landscape” since December 1997. It is a cross-border site covering 20 000 hectares in Spain and 10 000 in France and, despite the fact that Ordesa in Aragon and Gavarnie in the north are known as tourist areas, it is still a remarkably pastoral landscape.

The “natural landscape” is embodied in the immense and majestic glacial cirques of the northern slopes and the strikingly coloured deep canyons of Aragon: geomorphological curiosities shaped by the mass of the huge limestone overthrusts of which the heights tower above. The site is home to a thriving and rare animal life and a rich palette of flora which are endemic to the area.

A strong alliance between humans and nature

Twenty kilometres of high ridges, between 2 600 and 3 350 m, have produced striking climatic contrast. In order to make productive use of these basic differences by seeing them as features which complement each other, the pastoral communities on either side of the massif - as written agreements testify - have tried constantly, since at least the 13th century, to reinvent peace between them, transcending the inevitable disputes and friction of daily human life. As a result, famous “*Lies & Patzarias*” (relations and peace) treaties were drawn up and honed over the centuries, also affirming real independence from the central powers of the suzerains by guaranteeing - with a greater or lesser degree of effectiveness depending on the circumstances - free movement of goods and people, even in times of war between France and Spain. One of the most significant vestiges of this exemplary history, and a splendid testimony to an extraordinary alliance between humans and their natural environment, is the fact that, every July, Aragonese herds from the Broto valley move over the Bernatoire pass to graze on the grass - which is theirs to use - in the pastures of Ossoue, on the French side to the west of Gavarnie.

Restoration, rehabilitation

In the words of the World Heritage committee, the area is a living and evolving cultural landscape. In summer 2001, work is finally beginning on the restoration of the built heritage in the hamlet of Héas, one of the jewels, of great non-material value, of this World Heritage site. A project aimed at rehabilitating country tracks and cross-border paths is being actively studied by the Regional Environment Agency - the beginnings of a belated and difficult process of capitalising on the essentially cultural and rustic qualities of this prestigious site!

The site has only 2 000 inhabitants, spread among eight villages - three in France with 700 permanent residents and five in Spain - which have a direct interest in the 30 000 hectare area on the World Heritage list. With the exception of the village mayors, local political circles - which are under no electoral pressure because of the tiny population -

are for the moment showing no interest in the site and are not even aware of its full cultural value.

A future to be built

The experience of the last four years has convinced us that both the regional and the national authorities now realise that sustainable tourism on the site should be developed. However, focusing on only one aspect - nature, for example - would endanger the site as a whole. The natural landscape and the cultural landscape underpin each other inextricably.

This is a great opportunity to draw particular attention to this unique cross-border World Heritage site in Europe which deserves the concern of our community institutions - all the more so because sustainable, adapted and full development of the Mont Perdu massif would be a notable way of allaying current concerns about the future of Europe's countryside.

Patrice de Bellefon

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A booklet entitled "Tres Serols – Mont Perdu" has been issued on this World Heritage site. Published in French and Spanish, 168 pages, 220 FF, on sale at the headquarters of the Mont Perdu World Heritage Association, Gèdre Town Hall, F-65120 Gèdre.

Rural landscapes on the World Heritage list

The inclusion of cultural landscapes in the World Heritage list proved that UNESCO's World Heritage Convention is pioneering new approaches in the protection of the planet's cultural and natural diversity. The 23 sites listed in this category show that there exists a great diversity of outstanding cultural landscapes that are representative of the different regions of the world. Certain sites reflect specific techniques of land use that also guarantee and sustain biological diversity. This is in particular the case for Europe with the riverine terraces of the Wachau cultural landscape (Austria), the vine production of the Jurisdiction of Saint Emilion (France) or Cinque Terre (Italy), the cultivated lands of the Loire valley (France), the pastoral practices in the Pyrenees, Mont Perdu (France/Spain) or Hortobágy national park (Hungary) and the traditional land use systems of the isthmus of Kurzeme (Lithuania/Russia) and the agricultural landscape of southern Öland (Sweden).

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Non-governmental organisations

Heritage and people: ECOVAST 's mission

The well-being of the people and the heritage of rural Europe – that is the mission of ECOVAST, the European Council for the Village and Small Town. We are committed to finding the balance, the mutual support, and the partnership between the heritage and the needs of rural people. Our approach is described in our “*Strategy for Rural Europe*”*, we seek to promote debate, exchange and practical action. We do this through international working groups, national sections, conferences and multi-national projects. Our conference this year, to be held in Bosnia from 11-14 October, will focus on the theme of local development and heritage.

Rural architecture

Rural architecture has been a major theme for us since ECOVAST was created in 1984. We published a report on traditional rural buildings. Our national sections and member organisations are active in protecting and finding suitable new use for heritage buildings - estate complexes in Germany, monasteries in Russia and in Poland, abandoned houses in Croatia, churches in Germany and Romania, cottages in Northern Ireland.

Our report “*Agriculture and Forestry : sustaining their future in Europe*” emphasises the major role of these great rural industries in creating or serving the distinctive landscapes, building traditions, food and crafts of European regions and the benefits which can come from sustaining these traditions. We strongly advocate the wider use of agri-environment programmes, by which farmers are encouraged to sustain the heritage. We are now contributing to the TWIG (Transnational Woodland Industries Group) project, through which partner regions in England, Germany and Greece are demonstrating how to manage woodlands sustainably and to add value (both cultural and economic) to woodland products.

Landscape

We see the landscape as a major unifying element in the rural heritage of Europe. We strongly supported the drafting of the European Landscape Convention. Our landscape working group is now preparing a guide to good practice in assessment of landscape character, based on fieldwork in Slovakia, Hungary and Austria.

Tourism

We see strong links between rural heritage and tourism. Clear thinking, and determined action, are needed in order to ensure that these links are positive. In 1995, with Ecotourism and PRISMA, we launched the Heritage Trails project to show how the cultural and natural heritage of a rural region can be used sustainably for rural tourism, to the true benefit of local people. Two heritage trails were opened in 1997 and 1998, in the Dolenjska/Bela Krajina region of Slovenia and the Dobroudja region of Bulgaria. Since

then, a further heritage trail has been opened in south-west Slovenia. We are now giving expert support to the creation of heritage trails in the Karlovac and Rijeka regions of Croatia.

The same principles governed the WITRANET (Wine Traditions network) project, in which ECOVAST worked with partners in Greece, Italy, Austria and Portugal to show how wine, and wine-related culture, could bring added value to the local economy. We have supported the creation of the eco-museum of terraces and vines at Cortemilia in Piemonte and the multinational exchange between France, Italy, Spain and Greece on the maintenance of traditional terraces.

Central Europe

We are now working, with “Forum Synergies” and five national non-governmental organisations, on the “PREPARE” project to strengthen civil society at local level in the ten pre-accession countries of central Europe. The ECOVAST contribution will embrace the role of the rural heritage in enhancing the pride and the well being of the local people. We will welcome opportunities to work with others on practical projects to protect the heritage and to serve the well being of rural people.

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**available in many languages, it can be found on the website www.ecovast.org*

"Rural areas are lively, active places abounding with ideas and innovation; therein lie the roots of the diverse cultures and much of the natural, architectural and historic heritage which make up the European identity."

Motion by the European Countryside Movement - 1999

Rurality - Environment – Development (RED)

A rural impetus for territorial cohesion

When, in 1980, the founders of the international association RED chose the name Rurality-Environment-Development, they were expressing their desire for a kind of development which, at the time, they described as comprehensive and integrated and whose underlying principles now form the basis of sustainable development policies. Although no explicit reference was made to the heritage, it could clearly be inferred from each of these terms. Furthermore, RED's initial activities embodied the political message that the rural heritage had to be regarded as one of the components of a region's identity and a factor in local development.

The built heritage ...

The development policies advocated by RED have always included both the built and the natural heritage. Early campaigners for the preservation of vernacular rural architecture included several of the association's founder members. In 1986, as a result of the first cross-border contacts, RED activities relating to the built heritage were brought together under the banner "Architecture without frontiers" and this led to exchanges of policy approaches and expertise, interregional meetings, etc. This in turn paved the way for a whole range of activities, some of the more noteworthy of which are:

- the establishment of the first Council of Europe cultural route devoted to rural architecture;
- three international architecture competitions;
- various publications including "*Enduits extérieurs, reflets des territoires*" (Exterior finishes as a reflection of local traditions) and "*Bâtiments anciens, usages nouveaux*" (Old buildings, new uses).

... and the natural heritage

The natural heritage is another recurring theme in the association's work. The clearest illustration of this is its UGET programme, a series of twenty one meetings held between 1989 and 1999 reflecting various integrated approaches to environmental issues viewed from the sustainable development angle. In the later stages of the programme, meetings were held on such topics as "Biodiversity, ecological networks and local action", "Local players and sustainable development" and "The environment as a development partner". The publications which resulted from these exchanges enable the discussion to continue today.

Co-operation with European institutions

In addition to its partnerships with local and regional operators, RED has close relations with the European institutions. Its desire for rural areas to be represented at the highest level prompted it to propose the setting up, in 1991, of the European Centre for Rural and Environmental Interests (CEIRE) which now groups together some forty NGOs enjoying consultative status with the Council of Europe. This grouping was heavily involved in European Nature Conservation Year 1995, running a Nature NGOs task force and holding a Nature NGOs week in Strasbourg in October 1995. The CEIRE has also been involved in activities such as the drafting of the European Landscape Convention and the Pan-european Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy. A survey conducted recently by RED for the town and countryside grouping on “International NGOs and sustainable development” is further evidence of the association’s interest in the environment and its varied approach to the issues involved.

Given that RED is motivated by a concern to ensure integration of development policies, its lobbying activities are also directed at the European Commission, through both personal contacts and official discussion forums. Its chair, Gérard Peltre, is also vice-chair of the Commission’s Advisory Committee on Rural Development. RED supports this integrated approach in its role as co-ordinator of the European Countryside Movement, a platform for international NGOs which lobbies the European Union. The title of a recent luncheon debate organised by the movement, “Natura 2000, an opportunity for rural development?” reflects this constant concern to establish a constructive link between environmental interests and development.

For over twenty years now RED has been drawing on a European network of rural partners to perform its task of conveying the aspirations and needs of rural areas to the European institutions, always attempting to reconcile social, economic, cultural and environmental interests with a view to promoting harmonious local and regional development.

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INFO - COUNCIL OF EUROPE – INFO

The Portorož Ministerial Conference on Cultural Heritage

The 5th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for the Cultural Heritage, held in Portorož (Slovenia) in April 2001 (focusing on the cultural heritage and the challenge of globalisation) provided an opportunity to take stock of the Council's achievements in this field and to look ahead to its tasks over the coming years. 41 member states of the European Cultural Convention were represented at the conference. Observers included Canada, Mexico, UNESCO and ICOMOS. The "pillars" of activity referred to in Conference Resolution No.2 correspond to four major functions vested in the Organisation by virtue of its political nature and its current aims, namely working together to establish ethical principles and common policies and standards; disseminating those principles; providing on-the-spot advice for new member states wishing to implement integrated, cross-sectoral heritage policies; and awareness-raising and training to promote intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding between the different communities.

Three main areas of activity

The activity programme being prepared for 2002, which will draw on the guidelines laid down at the conference, is based on recognition of the fact that culture and the cultural and natural heritage are both a means of asserting identity and differences in response to the dangers of uniformity inherent in globalisation and a vital factor in sustainable development for Europe as a whole. The main types of activity to be carried out in close co-operation with the cultural and environment sectors (natural heritage/regional planning), which now form part of the same directorate, can be summarised as follows.

Ethical and standard-setting activities: promoting cultural values and the cultural heritage in a context of globalisation

The process of updating the European Conventions on the architectural and archaeological heritage will be an opportunity to consider the extension of the concept of heritage and the functions that the heritage now performs as a social link, a means of promoting dialogue between communities, and an instrument of cohesion. A system should be set up to ensure the preservation of the cultural assets associated with a particular region, no matter what the current political situation in that region. Another standard-setting measure proposed is to draw up ethical principles and codes of good practice relating to methods for interpreting the heritage, the digitisation of cultural property and the use of images of the heritage.

At the same time the European Heritage network (the HEREIN project) and its website www.european-heritage.net will be developed, with the support of the European Union, as a means for public services to collaborate on the implementation of their heritage policies and as a forum for multilateral projects involving the private sector and civil society. It will be a new tool for administrative bodies, local authorities and civil society.

Activities to raise awareness and encourage participation: promoting cultural diversity, preventing conflicts and strengthening cohesion

The programme of the Cultural Heritage committee interacts with other activities in the field of culture and education (such as history teaching) but it is most strongly reflected in flagship activities such as European Heritage Days, the European Cultural Routes, and heritage education. The European dimension of these activities will need to be further enhanced in order to foster mutual understanding between the various cultural communities and create the conditions for conflict prevention, stability and cohesion in Europe. Special emphasis will be placed on participation and the involvement of voluntary organisations as a positive factor for democracy and social cohesion.

Action in the field, support for the implementation of heritage policies and cross-disciplinary co-operation

Action to assist the new member states in implementing their heritage policies will be continued through legislative and technical support programmes and the development of technical co-operation and consultancy programmes aimed at improving people's living conditions and surroundings. These activities will be based on a cross-disciplinary approach incorporating heritage enhancement into regional planning and local development policies. When the European Landscape Convention comes into force, it should encourage the adoption of sustainable development strategies taking full advantage of a region's cultural and natural resources. Particular emphasis should be placed on priority regions for Council activities such as south east Europe.

Since the Council of Europe is a political organisation, future developments in the intergovernmental work programme on the cultural heritage will naturally reflect its current aims. The trend will probably be towards less support for cultural activities *per se* or purely technical co-operation and more emphasis on schemes promoting mutual understanding between different cultures and adherence to a "common heritage" of values providing the foundations for a Europe-wide area of stability and peace.

First Conference of signatory states to the European Landscape Convention

The European Landscape Convention was opened for signature in Florence, Italy, on 20 October 2000 at a Council of Europe ministerial conference organised for the purpose. As of 1 August 2001 the following 21 states had signed it: Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Spain, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Norway, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey. The Convention will come into force once it has been ratified by ten signatory states.

The aims of the Convention are to promote landscape protection, management and planning, and to organise European co-operation on landscape issues. It is now the chief international treaty concerned exclusively with the protection, management and enhancement of the European landscape.

The first Conference of signatory states to the European Landscape Convention will be held on 22 and 23 November 2001 in Strasbourg. It will offer an important opportunity to promote the signature and/or ratification of the Convention so that it comes into force rapidly, to provide legal assistance to signatory states and to the Council of Europe member states invited to sign the Convention, and to prepare its actual implementation after it comes into force.

Special attention will be given to the five following themes:

- landscape policies: contribution to the wellbeing of European citizens and to sustainable development (social, economic, cultural and ecological aspects);
- landscape identification, classification and quality objectives, taking advantage of cultural and natural resources;
- information, awareness-raising, public participation and training;
- innovatory tools for landscape protection, management and planning;
- landscape award.

For any further information, please contact Maguelonne Déjeant-Pons, Directorate General IV, Head of the Regional Planning and Technical Co-operation and Assistance division (Fax: 33 (0)3 88 41 37 51, e-mail: maguelonne.dejeant-pons@coe.int).

European Convention for the protection of animals kept for farming purposes

This Convention (ETS 87, 1976) was the first international legislation in this field. It is a “framework convention” which lays down principles for the keeping, care and housing of animals, in particular in intensive breeding systems. More detailed directives have been drawn up by the standing committee of the parties to the Convention on the keeping of various categories of farm animals : pigs, cattle, sheep, goats, domestic fowl, ratitae, domestic ducks, Muscovy ducks and hybrids, domestic geese, fur animals and turkeys. Work is now focusing on domestic rabbits and farmed fish. Adopted recommendations are also regularly revised in the light of new scientific evidence and practical experience.

In 1992, a Protocol of amendment to the Convention has extended the scope of the Convention to the breeding of animals produced as a result of genetic modifications or novel genetic combinations.

For any further information, please contact Laurence Lwoff, Directorate General I – Legal Affairs (Tel: 33 (0)3 88 41 22 68, Fax: 33 (0)3 88 41 27 64, e-mail: laurence.lwoff@coe.int Website: www.legal.coe.int/biotechnologies).

Publications

Many Council of Europe publications carry features on the rural heritage of Europe. You will find below a non-exhaustive selection of these.

Nature and environment series

Balanced development of the countryside in western Europe, N°58 (1992), Stucki
Rehabilitation of natural habitats in rural areas, N°59 (1992), DELA III
The integrated development of the countryside in central and eastern European countries, N°70 (1994), Ryszkowski

Regional planning series

Reviving Rural Europe, N°29,(1980), Graham Moss
Rural regions in the Scandinavian countries, problems and perspectives, N°36, (1981), Margaret Hammarberg
Mobilising the indigenous potential of disadvantaged regions - a new dimension of regional planning, N°40 (1981), Jacques Robert

European campaign for rural areas

Collection of demonstration projects of the European campaign for rural areas, (1988), Dan Bernfeld

Amicale Femmes of the Council of Europe

Hospitality in Europe, Yesterday's traditions – Today's Recipes
The Amicale Femmes has published two books in French explaining the national customs, traditions of hospitality and recipes of the Council of Europe's member states. Volume I includes contributions from countries that joined the Council of Europe prior to 1984. Volume II is devoted to the members admitted after that date. These books can be purchased through the Amicale Femmes of the Council of Europe, Building E, F-67075 Strasbourg. All proceeds from the sale of the books go to the solidarity section of Amicale Femmes for women and children in difficult circumstances.