



Strasbourg, 27 April 2021

CEP-CDCPP (2021) 5E

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION

11th COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONFERENCE ON

THE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION

Report
“Landscape and responsibility”
and draft recommendation

Council of Europe
Palais de l'Europe, Strasbourg
26-27 May 2021

*Document of the General Secretariat of the Council of Europe
Directorate of Democratic Participation*

Summary

The European Landscape Convention states in its Preamble:

*“The member States of the Council of Europe signatory hereto, ...
Believing that the landscape is a key element of individual and social well-being and that its protection, management and planning entail rights and **responsibilities for everyone**”.*

*

In order to enlighten these provisions, work has been carried out within the framework of the Work Programme of the European Landscape Convention, from a sustainable development perspective, on the concept of “rights” and then on the concept of “responsibilities”.

– The work carried out on the concept of “rights” has led to the adoption of the Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)7 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the contribution of the European Landscape Convention to the exercise of human rights and democracy with a view to sustainable development, published together with a conceptual reference report: Council of Europe Landscape Convention: Contribution to human rights, democracy and sustainable development, Council of Europe Publishing, 2018.

– The work continued on the concept of “responsibility”. The 10th Council of Europe Conference on the European Landscape Convention, Strasbourg, 6-7 May 2019 (CEP-CDCPP (2019) 20E):

- took note of the Report “Landscape and responsibility”, prepared in the framework of the Work Programme of the Council of Europe for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention, by Mr Yves Luginbühl, in the capacity of Expert of the Council of Europe CEP-CDCPP (2019) 8E;

- decided to continue the work, in accordance with the CDCPP decision on the establishment of a Working Group with the elaboration of a draft recommendation of the Committee of Ministers on “Landscape and responsibility”, on a landscape ethics charter and on landscape well-being indicators;

- recalled that at its 6th meeting (CDCPP (2017) 18 rev.), the CDCPP decided on the composition of the Working Group of the European Landscape Convention “Rights and responsibilities for everyone” (Preamble of the Convention) and entrusted the Secretariat to designate experts.

*

The Report “Landscape and responsibility of stakeholders for sustainable and harmonious development” was by Mr Régis Ambroise, in the capacity of Expert of the Council of Europe, in the framework of the Council of Europe activities for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention.

M. Régis Ambroise is agronomist and urban planner, Operations Manager for Landscape and Agriculture successively with the Ministries in charge of the Equipment, of the Agriculture of France, member of the expert committee in charge of preparing the drafting of the European Landscape Convention, Member of the Collective “Landscapes of after oil”.

A draft recommendation for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention – Landscape and responsibility of stakeholders for sustainable and harmonious development, was prepared by the

Secretariat of the Council of Europe on consultation with Mr Régis Ambroise, in the capacity of Expert of the Council of Europe

*

The Meeting of the Working Group on “Landscape and Responsibility” was held on 15 March 2021 (document CEP-CDCPP-WG (2021) 3E). Its Members appointed Mrs Liv Kirstine Just-Mortensen, Senior Advisor, Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation of Norway, as Chair. The Working Group made various amendments to the draft recommendation and decided to present the revised version to the 11th Council of Europe Conference on the European Landscape Convention, Strasbourg, 26-27 May 2021.

Having regard to the preamble of the European Landscape Convention, according to which,

*“The member States of the Council of Europe signatory hereto, ...
Believing that the landscape is a key element of individual and social well-being and that its protection, management and planning entail rights and **responsibilities for everyone**”.*

the Conference is invited:

- to take note of the conceptual reference Report “Landscape and responsibility of stakeholders for sustainable and harmonious development”, prepared by Mr Régis Ambroise, in the capacity of Expert of the Council of Europe, in the framework of the Council of Europe activities for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention (Part I);
- to examine the draft recommendation for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention – Landscape and responsibility of stakeholders for sustainable and harmonious development, prepared by the Secretariat of the Council of Europe in consultation with the expert, to make any proposals for amendments and, if it considers it appropriate, to decide to transmit it to the Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP) with a view to its submission for adoption to the Committee of Ministers (Part II).

PART I

Report

“Landscape and responsibility of stakeholders for sustainable and harmonious development”

*prepared in the framework of the Work Programme of the Council of Europe
for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention*

*by Mr Régis Ambroise, in the capacity of Expert of the Council of Europe,
Agronomist and urban planner, Operations Manager for Landscape and Agriculture
successively with the Ministry in charge of the Equipment,
of the Environment and Agriculture of France.*

Development of landscape in the 20th century

The development models implemented during the 20th century were based on extensive use of fossil-fuel energy resources, in particular coal and oil. With these models, countries were industrialised, wealth was generated and the public benefited from greater levels of comfort, greater food security and increased life expectancy. At the same time, however, this gradually led to the degradation of biodiversity and a reduction in the amount of clean water available, as well as to land, marine and air pollution and an increase in greenhouse gases which have accelerated climate change. All these trends now pose serious threats to world peace and to the future of humankind. These changes are calling the models themselves into question.

20th-century industrialisation led to radical transformation of landscapes. To make the most of the use of fossil fuels and derive maximum benefits and profits from the process, towns were redesigned to be at the service of motor cars, urban development spread further and further outward, road, air and rail transport networks and the related infrastructure were expanded, agricultural areas became specialised and the size of holdings increased greatly, while recreational areas were developed along coastlines and in mountain regions. All these changes greatly altered and often degraded the appearance of landscapes.

In most countries, during this entire period of industrialisation and modernisation, landscape did not form part of the discussions about the plans for society. It did change, but merely as the outcome of planning choices that imposed their solutions on the physical environment without incorporating qualitative aspects. Only the most iconic sites and some town centres benefited from protection policies. They were regarded as historical features that could be useful for tourist development policies but were not connected to contemporary issues. Elsewhere, no one was responsible for changes in landscapes. Appreciation of them was an entirely private matter. The same applied to environmental issues: only the most outstanding species and areas were protected.

Sustainable development and landscape

There were, of course, reactions at all levels. However, the negative impacts of these development models in environmental and landscape terms only really began to be taken into account when they started being reflected in clear economic and health costs. The concept of sustainable development emerged at international level at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro from 3 to 14 June 1992. It has taken over from the idea of the conservation of nature as such. This is because focusing solely on protecting the areas that are most outstanding from an environmental point of view and entrusting specialised personnel with such protection is not enough to resolve the broader issues that are emerging. All areas and all human beings are concerned, and respect for living beings must be ensured. Everyone must be able to play an active part in sustainable development.

In 2000 and with the same goal in mind, the member States of the Council of Europe, “concerned to achieve sustainable development”, took on the responsibility of extending the issue of landscape to all areas, while “acknowledging that the landscape is an important part of the quality of life for people” and stating that “its protection, management and planning entail rights and responsibilities for everyone”.¹ These commitments were a great advance in terms of bringing about changes in practices, increasing the attention paid to the quality of all landscapes and providing greater space and resources for those in charge of improving the quality of people’s surroundings. Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2008\)3](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the guidelines for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention provides that the definition of the term landscape² given in the convention “expresses [...] the desire to confront, head-on and in a comprehensive way, the theme of the quality of the surroundings where people live; this is recognised as a precondition for individual and social well-being (understood in the physical, physiological, psychological and intellectual sense) and for sustainable development, as well as a resource conducive to economic activity.”

Climate change

The issue of climate change, highlighted since 1988 at international level by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), really came to the fore in public debate in the 2010s. Resolution A/RES/70/1 adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 25 September 2015, “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, set 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs), including the fight against climate change and its impacts. The Paris Agreement of 12 December 2015 is aimed at “holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels”; “pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognising that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change”; “increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development, in a manner that does not threaten food production” and “making finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development.”

1. Excerpts from the Preamble to the European Landscape Convention.

2. Article I.a of the European Landscape Convention: “‘Landscape’ means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.”

The above position fundamentally calls into question the foundations of our economies, and an approach of this kind requires efforts by everyone to cut back on fossil fuels, make energy systems more efficient and boost the use of low-carbon alternative energy sources.

The crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic

In 2020, in its presentation of SDG 13 “Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”, the UN website said that “as countries move toward rebuilding their economies after COVID-19, recovery plans can shape the 21st-century economy in ways that are clean, green, healthy, safe and more resilient. The current crisis is an opportunity for a profound, systemic shift to a more sustainable economy that works for both people and the planet.”³

This crisis has opened the eyes of a large part of the population and political leaders to the risks that the current modes of territorial planning pose for the spread of pandemics. It is necessary to take account of the landscape dimension in order to ensure greater responsibility on the part of all stakeholders in implementing these changes.

Landscape as a key factor in sustainable development, combating climate change and ensuring public well-being

Drawing on the work done to promote the implementation of the European Landscape Convention, and in order to contribute to the new commitments arising from the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement, while also dealing with the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis it is now necessary to take full account of the landscape dimension as a vital aspect of individual and social well-being. It represents a real “tool” for sustainable development policies and the fight against global warming in particular. The importance of the changes to be carried out implies that all the actors concerned by the landscape commit themselves in this sense, in a responsible manner.

The issue of landscape needs to be addressed in this context today because even though the landscape approach, as set out in the European Landscape Convention and its reference texts, does not appear as such in the SDGs, it is an excellent means of involving the public, getting them to act responsibly and achieving the relevant objectives, in particular those relating to the environment, energy, food, urban development, health, employment and poverty. The landscape issue should therefore be fully integrated in the recovery plans after the pandemic.

Many of the activities conducted by the European Landscape Convention since its inception provide convincing examples of local and regional elected representatives, professionals, associations or residents coming together – with or without financial support – around the issue of landscape, to commit their particular areas to more sustainable and harmonious development processes. These examples are based on different methods of operation but all involve the same principles, which can be described as landscape approaches.

Landscape approaches and responsibility of stakeholders

Given their crosscutting nature, landscape approaches help to make the reorganisation of space and social life more consistent and efficient, so that the necessary ecological, economic and cultural

3. www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/climate-change

transition processes can be undertaken in a manner that is more participatory, effective and quicker. They are based on the methodological elements presented below.

Developing detailed awareness of the natural and human features of places

Every place has its own particular identity that stems from its history and geography. The climate, relief, hydrology, vegetation, living species and soil types combine in a specific way in each case depending on natural changes and the actions of the human beings who have developed the places over time to live there. This knowledge, which was all too often neglected by 20th-century developers, reveals the advantages and disadvantages of given areas, reproducing the succession of projects that have shaped them, in conjunction with living species, and which feed into the local culture of the residents. The harnessing of cross-disciplinary skills and exchanges between experts and the public very often combine to produce universally-recognised policies and objectives. These sometimes draw inspiration from the most ingenious solutions devised by previous generations.

Involving the public

As living environments for local residents and places to be discovered by visitors, landscapes concern us all. People all have knowledge about the areas where they live, move about, work, develop relationships and spend time, and which they enjoy during their leisure time. Having to deal with the reality of those landscapes, they are aware of some of their advantages and disadvantages and can therefore supplement the technical and functional knowledge of professionals with knowledge from their own experiences and attachment to the places concerned. Exchanges between experts and residents therefore help to improve projects that have an impact on landscape, thus ensuring that they are more widely accepted. If all individuals are invited to take part in projects from the outset, they can participate in their success and may even be willing to change some of their habits by assuming their share of responsibility for building a better way of living together.

Promoting multiple land use types and multifunctional development

Collective knowhow makes it possible to produce common general policy approaches in which everyone finds their place. This leads to solutions which, for each development project, help to address several challenges simultaneously on the one hand, and take account of the links between the various levels of operation on the other. This approach is at odds with the spatial planning methods developed after the Second World War, which were based on the concept of “zoning”. Under that system, a specific land use is defined for each zone, which often leads to significant wastage in economic and land terms. If this single-function zoning approach were retained, in 30 years’ time the amount of land required for feeding people, housing them, ensuring adequate biodiversity, producing energy, moving about and engaging in leisure activities would be more than twice the land area available on the planet. We therefore need to devise systems that allow for several types of use of individual areas of land: production (agricultural or urban) and biodiversity, and/or energy and/or leisure activities, etc. For instance, well-managed farmland can simultaneously and sustainably provide food, energy and biodiversity, whilst also purifying water supplies, among other things. Similarly, urban developments may produce energy and food supplies, provide space for other living species and be used for dwellings and a range of activities. In some circumstances, this approach leads to consideration being given to the question of new landscapes which are more complex and more harmonious.

Daring to talk about beauty

The theme of landscape embodies the quality and beauty of life projects. When it comes to tackling pollution, stemming the process of climate change and sharing resources, particularly in terms of food and water, people become involved more actively and with greater responsibility if they understand that the solutions implemented will also lead to greater harmony between individuals, better quality of life and more beauty in their environments. This search for beauty, founded in the history of each area and to which artists can contribute, reflects the values behind these new landscapes.

Harnessing landscape approaches of this kind makes it easier to ensure the success of certain projects launched to meet some of the SDGs from the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They provide a more crosscutting and more widely shared vision of the areas concerned and are based on participatory methods geared towards achieving sustainable and harmonious spatial development. They combine the practical knowledge of residents with the knowhow of experts. They also make it possible to expand efforts to identify solutions that were initially intended to deal with single issues to other objectives. In addressing the spatial and social consequences of planning choices for the public on the one hand, and in jointly working towards better surroundings or living environments on the other, these approaches also play a part in producing new forms of harmony and beauty that are enhanced by knowledge of the history of the relevant places. They instil greater responsibility among the stakeholders.

The considerations that follow describe how landscape approaches that were applied to sector-specific policies set out in Article 5.d. of the European Landscape Convention have improved the responses to some of the SDGs from the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Agriculture and landscape

Farmers have long been recognised for their role in managing land, and valued for the quality of the products and landscapes they produced. The industrialised production, processing and distribution systems used today are now being called into question because of their negative impacts on the environment, the climate, health and the landscape. While the issue of landscape was not usually addressed in 20th-century agricultural policies, or was only addressed defensively, the agricultural landscape was nevertheless radically transformed by powerful land development policies which involved increasing the size of holdings, draining or irrigating land and getting rid of many country lanes and farmland landscape features such as hedges, walls, rivulets and ponds.

Agricultural landscape and productive land

Many agricultural research and development programmes are currently seeking to address SDG 2, “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture”, from the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.⁴ Some involve promoting agroecology, which is a way of devising agricultural production systems that are based on the functions performed by ecosystems. Agroecology aims to make maximum use of nature as a production factor, maintaining its

4. Target 2.4 provides as follows: “By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality.”

capacities for renewal. It involves the use of a range of techniques such as crop diversification and lengthening of rotation periods, no-tilling, covering of land in winter and the use of semi-natural habitats, thereby enabling agricultural production to take place while preserving natural resources (water and soil organic matter, biodiversity) and reducing pressure on the environment (limitation of the use of chemical fertilisers and plant protection products, reduction of greenhouse gases, etc.). Farming is looked at in the round, taking account of the areas where it is carried out.

Landscape approaches can facilitate the implementation of systems of this kind by placing particular emphasis on knowledge of the characteristics of each part of the productive land in connection with the remainder of the relevant areas. Just as agricultural landscape was profoundly altered to allow the development of industrial farming it must now be recomposed to facilitate the introduction of successful agroecology that leaves room for other types of life. Thus, landscape approaches can propose that the size and shape of land parcels be redesigned in line with the agronomic potential of the soil in order to improve both economic and environmental performance. At the same time, they enable consideration to be given to the location and choice of – and type of upkeep for – new semi-natural habitats (grass strips, trees and hedges, walls and rivulets, etc.) so that they can perform several functions: increase in crop and livestock yields, production of wood and energy, increase in biodiversity (including beneficial organisms in the context of plant protection against pests), combating erosion and flooding, and climate change adaptation and mitigation. When applied to productive land, these landscape approaches enable farmers, their advisers and agronomic, ecological, hydrological and energy experts to come together on the ground and observe conditions, and examine how best to rearrange farm holdings in relation to the challenges of the respective areas.

Agricultural landscapes and people's surroundings

Farmland is also part of the surroundings or living environment of farmers, local residents and living species nearby, and all those who enjoy it for their leisure activities. In addition to improving new agroecological production systems, landscape approaches facilitate the exploration of issues that strengthen ties at the local level, between farmers and the local community: food sold locally, outdoor activities, quality of living environments, etc. The setting up of direct-sales outlets, the development of walking trails, the incorporation of sustainable architecture in new building designs, the development of energy resources for local use and the protection of farmland against urban development projects can all be discussed and worked out during visits involving all landscape users.

The expression of all points of view concerning agricultural production systems and people's surroundings helps to open up minds and steer projects towards innovative solutions that satisfy a whole range of objectives to enable everyone to identify a benefit and take on a share of responsibility: farmers, who are responsible for the changes in their farming systems in particular, and who will benefit in terms of income, their environment, social recognition and job creation; the various experts who support farmers, who will be able to expand their skills through training in these landscape approaches; and elected representatives and the public, who will discover landscape as a common good and agree to share responsibility for its development with farmers (taking account of the three strands set out in the European Landscape Convention: protection, management and planning of landscape).

Landscape and urban development

Towns and cities are now the places where most people live and where they consume large amounts of energy for housing and transport purposes, on top of that required for delivering food there and

producing daily necessities. The era of “fossil fuels rule” and zoning was underpinned by the key principles of modernity set out in the 1933 Athens Charter, transformed urban design, altered building materials and transport networks and led to the rapid spread of functional landscapes requiring much energy and space, but which have rarely been recognised for their aesthetic qualities.

Nowadays, towns and cities use almost three-quarters of the energy deemed necessary and produce three-quarters of greenhouse gases, primarily through transport (car travel and goods) and buildings (heating, equipment, lighting, etc.). The urgent need for energy and ecological transition raises the issue of the transformation needed in some existing urban landscapes. This calls for new ways of building and planning cities and new transport methods, as indicated in SDG 11, “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”, of the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. More and more elected representatives, architects, urban planners, engineers and landscape architects are coming together around this goal. The public are also directly concerned, because very often they will have to change their lifestyles.

The single-function zoning of the previous era, which led to increasing levels of unavoidable travel, is gradually being replaced by the concept of mobility which seeks to reduce such travel by ensuring a greater functional diversity of individual neighbourhoods. This is reflected in higher density building, the end of urban sprawl and the growth of low-carbon private and public transport. It is also recommended that buildings be built and insulated with renewable, low-energy materials. Although valuable and legitimate, the very technical, technological, scientific and sectoral dimensions of these new concerns should not, however, be applied without taking account of the specific features of the areas concerned. Applying the same software from northern to southern Europe and worldwide would produce the same urban landscapes everywhere that might be “green” but would be totally standardised.

“Making” towns through landscape means improving urban planners’ solutions by using the geography of the areas concerned, the relief, climate, the renewable materials available in the surrounding regions, built heritage and the gardens and parks. It means turning these assets to good account and taking local constraints into consideration. This landscape knowledge helps to identify the solutions best suited to the local natural context, whether in terms of the environment, energy or economic development. It also considers the specific nature of the cultures, histories and identities of old and new residents, giving them the role of “experts” for devising the future. The chances of successfully completing transition processes are greatly increased with the involvement of residents in spatial redevelopment studies, the drawing up of urban planning and architectural projects and the creation of public spaces, and by discussing with them the issues of urban aesthetics. Being directly concerned by, and actively involved in, moving their towns and cities towards more sustainable development and more harmonious coexistence, they are all the more willing to change their living environments and lifestyles (relationships with others, types of consumption, transport and housing choices, etc.) in an entirely responsible manner. Local elected representatives and associations have a key part to play in this process of involving the public through landscape.

Landscape and energy

The widespread use of fossil fuels and materials during the 20th century, and still today, has played a major part in climate change, water, air and soil pollution, the erosion of biodiversity, the production of great volumes of waste and the uniformisation of landscapes. SDG 7 of the United Nations 2030 Agenda

for Sustainable Development is to “ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all”.⁵

It is therefore important now to learn to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels and expensive and dangerous nuclear power by limiting our needs, improving energy efficiency and using renewable energy sources. The solutions will largely come from the relevant regions’ own resources and the active involvement of their residents. Many projects are beginning to show that, in both urban and rural areas, landscape approaches can be used in spatial planning to save energy costs and also to make the most of locally-available renewable energy resources. Such solutions involve the public in changing their lifestyles for the sake of the greater, shared well-being.

The new infrastructure necessary for producing renewable energy (solar, wind, water, wood and biomass, etc.) now forms part of landscapes being met with either enthusiasm or rejection. It falls mainly to local, elected representatives to undertake landscape approaches to effectively support the implementation of local energy policies. Given their crosscutting, partnership-based approach, these approaches bring better knowledge of a particular area’s overall energy potential and help to resolve any conflicts through grassroots discussions. Alongside the approaches advocated by the energy sector, they help the local and regional authorities who are themselves concerned to determine the “energy mix” best suited to the natural and human features of their regions. These landscape approaches also make it possible to observe and disclose any inconsistencies in implementation, such as support for the building of wind turbines or biogas plants on land that is very intensively farmed and therefore requires high fossil-fuel inputs, or without any attention being paid to outstanding landscape features.

The support of the public for energy transition and their active involvement in the process require them to understand the reasons for it, believe that it is justified and get something in return, in financial terms and in terms of their surroundings. Landscape must also be of benefit to the entire community, not just a small section of the population. Landscape approaches thus enable the relevant public authorities to undertake ambitious energy policies in their areas with the support of a section of the population able to recognise that the choices made ensure that changes in landscape are meaningful. The aim is for the decisions to be part of a consciously-chosen ongoing process of which the public can feel proud.

Landscape and health

The current pandemic situation calls for a more determined study of the links between landscape and health in a context marked in particular by the rapid erosion of biodiversity, the multiplication of off-farm breeding, the concentration of populations in metropolises, the importance of exchanges and transport at the global level and global warming in particular. All these phenomena are risk factors for the spread of epidemics. During the confinements to which the population of many countries has been subjected, some people have rediscovered the advantages of living in the countryside, buying unprocessed local products, starting to work from home and going on holiday less far away. These changes in lifestyles call for new ways of developing territories in order to make them more resistant to risks and more welcoming to new populations. This is a vast project that must be undertaken rapidly.

5. “This goal is central to the major challenges of today as well as to the opportunities of the future. It undoubtedly constitutes an opportunity for transforming lives, economies and the planet. In terms both of combating climate change, of course, and also of developing employment, housing, connectivity, security and food production, etc., access by all to sustainable energy is vital.” (www.agenda-2030.fr/odd/odd7-garantir-laces-de-tous-des-services-energetiques-fiables-durables-et-modernes-un-cout-46 (in French).

Furthermore, it is now recognised that sick or frail people recover more quickly when they benefit from a natural environment with the possibility of walks and activities in gardens. Hospital managers are working with landscape gardeners to provide such spaces for their patients by designing their buildings in this way.

Landscape quality objectives working for more sustainable and harmonious spatial development

Landscape approaches are employed to back up policies in specific sectors such as agriculture, urban planning, energy, health and others; they are also used in procedures that involve landscape directly such as landscape plans, charters, programmes, atlases or inventories. They refer to the concept of “landscape quality objectives” which, to be properly understood, must be accompanied by the terms “working for more sustainable and harmonious spatial development”. This is because the term “landscape quality” may have a different meaning for each individual and depends on the values being referred to. It is therefore important to specify the values to which the European Landscape Convention relates. Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2008\)3](#) on the guidelines for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention refers to “the quality of the surroundings where people live; this is recognised as a precondition for individual and social well-being (understood in the physical, physiological, psychological and intellectual sense) and for sustainable development, as well as a resource conducive to economic activity”. It is in relation to these various functions of landscape, to which we must now add that of a “contributor” to the fight against climate change, that the term “landscape quality objective” can be understood from a perspective based on the concept of responsibility.

Landscape-based participation methods

In order to foster the participation of both of the general public, local and regional authorities and other parties which have an interest in defining and implementing landscape policies, it is useful to promote facilitation methods based directly on landscape.⁶ These may include group field visits, outdoor discussions against the background of the area to be developed and sharing of old and new visual documents (plans, maps, photos, paintings, etc.). Sketches, drawings and block diagrams produced to help spatialise proposals and check their consistency are powerful methods for capitalising more effectively on the knowhow of all concerned without neglecting aspects which could block developments at a later stage. These methods foster the sharing of points of view, enhance knowledge levels and help move projects towards promoting the common good. The formulation of quality objectives by the authorities for landscapes identified following public consultation can be expanded and enhanced through the interplay of different points of view. These landscape quality objectives can be expressed in a new, more widely shared way that is better geared towards the goals of sustainable development, combating climate change, and hence the quality of surroundings. Field visits are therefore real working tools. Arranging them takes time but the result is beneficial as it allows participants to feel responsible for the outcome of the work and jointly commit themselves to implementing the projects they have agreed upon.

Landscape and job creation

The preamble to the European Landscape Convention states that landscape “constitutes a resource favourable to economic activity and whose protection, management and planning can contribute to job

6. See in particular Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2019\)8](#) with a view to the implementation of the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe – Landscape and democracy: public participation.

creation”. The current context calls for moves towards radical changes in production methods and lifestyles. Landscape approaches can facilitate such changes at ground level. Training courses exist and need to be expanded, in particular: in schools and colleges for landscape architects, urban planners, architects, geographers, geologists, historians and jurists, where interest in studying the “greater landscape” is growing; in schools and colleges that train professionals who work in spatial planning, for instance, engineers and technicians in natural sciences, hydraulics and energy; and in schools and colleges that train farmers, foresters and heritage craftspeople. Training courses must also be aimed at elected representatives. It is important that these trainings deliver lessons that make people understand the importance of approaching the landscape as an instrument for the transitions to be undertaken.

Capitalising on all the natural and cultural resources of given areas helps create employment. The number of farmers is bound to increase considering the many functions to be developed for the production of goods and services linked to landscape. Urban planning and the building trades, some of whose work is focused on enhancing heritage and/or material assets at local level, are going to require people with new skills, in particular in the area of bio-sourced materials. Efforts to achieve energy independence are leading to local job creation in the areas of building insulation, the provision of public transport and the manufacturing of the equipment required for the growth in renewable energy. The redevelopment of equipment that is vital for supplying certain types of natural energy that have been neglected in recent decades very often involves learning old skills again, modernising them and creating new jobs locally. The types of tourism now developing in a less centralised manner are giving rise to new occupations that showcase the quality of these innovative landscapes.

During this period of such far-reaching changes, at a time when the values and methods of doing things and living together are being called into question, landscape must once again play a central part in the new ways of devising the future and of approaching spatial planning. The common good it represents for all living beings, the neglected assets concealed in it, and the beauty it provides without requiring anything in return mean that now, more than before, we are all becoming more open to showing fresh interest in it, broadening our points of view and assuming our responsibilities alongside other people. Landscape is once again becoming a unifying factor that plays a part in devising solutions for the future.

*

PART II

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION

Draft Recommendation CM/Rec(2021)... of the Committee of Ministers to member States for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe – Landscape and responsibility of stakeholders for sustainable and harmonious development

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage;

Considering that, according to Article 5.a. of the European Landscape Convention (ETS No. 176), landscape is “as an essential component of people’s surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity”;

Having regard to the provisions of the preamble of the European Landscape Convention (ETS No. 176), according to which the member States of the Council of Europe signatory hereto,

– have declared their concern to achieve sustainable development based on a balanced and harmonious relationship between social needs, economic activity and the environment;

– noted that landscape: “plays an important role in the public interest, in cultural, ecological, environmental and social terms”; “constitutes a resource favourable to economic activity, whose appropriate protection, management and planning can contribute to job creation”; “constitutes an essential element of individual and social well-being”;

– stressed that “its protection, management and planning imply rights and responsibilities for everyone”;

Recalling the provisions of the following recommendations of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the European Landscape Convention:⁷

– Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)3 on the guidelines for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention,

⁷. See also the following Recommendations: CM/Rec(2014)8 on promoting landscape awareness through education; CM/Rec(2015)7 on pedagogical material for landscape education in primary school; CM/Rec(2015)8 on the implementation of Article 9 of the European Landscape Convention on Transfrontier Landscapes; CM/Rec(2018)9 contributing to the implementation of the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe: creation of public funds for landscape; CM/Rec(2019)7 with a view to the implementation of the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe – Landscape integration in policies relating to rural territories in agricultural and forestry, energy and demographic transition.

– Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2017\)7](#) on the contribution of the European Landscape Convention to the exercise of human rights and democracy with a view to sustainable development,

– Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2019\)8](#) with a view to the implementation of the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe – Landscape and democracy: public participation;

Recalling that Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2013\)4](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States recommends that States Parties to the convention use the [European Landscape Convention Information System](#) of the Council of Europe with its [Glossary](#) in the framework of their co-operation;

Considering the provisions of Resolution A/RES/70/1 adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 25 September 2015 “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, seeking to “realize the human rights of all”, balancing “the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental”;

Considering the Paris Agreement done in Paris on 12 December 2015 which, in enhancing the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change of 1992, aims to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels;

Considering the provisions of the Lausanne Declaration on “[Landscape integration in sectoral policies](#)”, symbolically adopted on 20 October 2020 by the representatives of the States Parties to the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe;

Considering the importance of the landscape with regard to food, urban planning, energy and health issues, and the need to face the challenges resulting from climate change, the disappearance of living species, water and air pollution, the degradation of agricultural and forest soils, and the artificialisation of land;

Considering the seriousness of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has affected the whole world since 2020, and the lessons to be learnt from it;

Noting that this period of pandemic has only reinforced a strong social demand for landscape;

Noting that landscape can constitute a powerful unifying and operational factor for meeting the requirements of sustainable and harmonious development, in particular considering climate change issues;

Noting that according to Article 5, *b.* of the Convention, each Party undertakes to “establish procedures for the participation of the general public, local and regional authorities, and other parties with an interest in the definition and implementation of the landscape policies”;

Emphasising that Article 6, A of the Convention states that “Each Party undertakes to increase awareness among the civil society, private organisations, and public authorities of the value of landscapes, their role and changes to them”;

Expressing the wish, in accordance with the provisions of the preamble to the Convention, to arouse the “responsibility for everyone” to ensure landscape quality;

Recommends that the governments of the States Parties to the Convention:

1. Call on national, regional or local authorities to take into consideration the following measures:

– Integrating the landscape dimension in the policies concerned by sustainable development and climate change in particular

Commitment at the highest level is necessary to facilitate, from national to local level, discussions and action promoting sustainable and harmonious development that fully integrate the landscape dimension. Drawing attention to landscape is a powerful lever for uniting the stakeholders concerned in taking joint action.

– Promoting the use of landscape policies as tools working for other public policies with a direct and indirect impact on landscape

In order to provide adequate responses to the major challenges of sustainable development, it is necessary to promote the use of landscape policies as a tool for spatial planning and urban development policies and in cultural, environmental, agricultural, social, health and economic policies, as well as in other policies, particularly energy policies, which are directly or indirectly related to landscape.

– Promoting a sense of responsibility in society for the future of landscape

As landscape concerns everyone, everyone at their own level is responsible for it. Raising awareness among civil society and private organisations of the importance of landscape, and of their particular role, is vital in this connection. It is necessary also to train specialists in landscape appraisal and operations and to promote school and university courses which, in the relevant subject areas, address the values attaching to landscape and the issues raised by its protection, management and planning.

– Strengthening participatory tools that take account of landscape so as to facilitate the involvement of everyone

It is necessary to enable the public, local and regional authorities and those involved in designing and implementing landscape policies to understand the key issues relating to changes in landscape with a view to sustainable and harmonious development. To this end, participatory procedures need to be established, and opportunities for debates and meetings on the ground should be promoted.

– Valuing the diversity of points of view about landscape to define a common vision

Account has to be taken of the way in which landscapes are perceived and the knowledge that can result from experience of places and/or scientific analyses. This must be shared with a view to agreeing a common vision. The diversity of points of view about landscape is a useful asset for developing action programmes concerning landscape from the angle of sustainable and harmonious development.

– Building on exemplary sustainable territorial development projects conducted on the basis of landscape policies

The Landscape Award Alliance of the Council of Europe show that it is possible to achieve exemplary results with a view to sustainable and harmonious spatial development. Everyone can become involved and make a contribution conducive to the common good. The European Landscape Convention Information System of the Council of Europe allows to continue to exchange information on all matters covered by the provisions of the convention in order to promote knowledge of landscapes and landscape policies, in view of enhancing the quality of people's lives, taking care of their surroundings.

2. Encourage regional and local authorities to:

– initiate, with local actors – including the population, a work with a view to elaborating, and then promoting, participation texts for participation in the “Sustainable development and landscape” approach, reflecting the principles of the European Landscape Convention.

These texts, whose title, form and nature may vary (charter, agreement, declaration or other), are intended to be voluntary. Unless their authors wish otherwise, they are not intended to be legally binding, nor to have mandatory financial implications.

The appendix to this recommendation provides an example of drafting, as a source of inspiration.

Appendix

Example of text for the attention of local and regional authorities on “Sustainable development and landscape”,

*aimed at stakeholders working towards sustainable development,
with reference to the principles of the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe
(ETS No. 176) and its reference texts*

www.coe.int/Europeanlandscapeconvention

This example of text is intended to serve as a source of inspiration for public authorities wishing to prepare their own document. It refers to the principles of the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe. It aims to raise awareness among civil society and private organisations of the value of landscapes and the role they could play in guiding its evolution in the perspective of sustainable and harmonious development. It also aims to promote the participation of the general public and other parties with an interest in the definition and implementation of the landscape policies.

Its approval is part of a voluntary process. Unless its authors wish otherwise, it is not intended to be legally binding, nor to have mandatory financial implications.

*

Recognising the importance of the issues set out in the European Landscape Convention with regard to the objectives of the Resolution A/RES/70/1 adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 25 September 2015 “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals,⁸ seeking to “realise the human rights of all”, balancing “the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental”;

⁸. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere;

Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture;

Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages;

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all;

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;

Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all;

Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all;

Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all;

Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation;

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries;

Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable;

Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns;

Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts [acknowledging that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change];

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development;

Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss;

Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels;

Noting that the member States of the Council of Europe, signatories to the European Landscape Convention, have declared their “concern to achieve sustainable development based on a balanced and harmonious relationship between social needs, economic activity and the environment” (Preamble to the Convention);

Considering that, according to Article 5.a. of the European Landscape Convention (ETS No. 176), landscape is “as an essential component of people’s surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity”;

Recognising that, in accordance with the provisions of the preamble to the European Landscape Convention,

– the landscape “plays an important role in the public interest, in cultural, ecological, environmental and social terms”, “constitutes a resource favourable to economic activity, whose appropriate protection, management and planning can contribute to job creation”, “constitutes an essential element of individual and social well-being”;

– landscape protection, management and planning “imply rights and responsibilities for everyone”;

Considering that according to Article 1.e. of the European Landscape Convention, landscape management means “action, from a perspective of sustainable development, to ensure the regular upkeep of a landscape, so as to guide and harmonise changes which are brought about by social, economic and environmental processes”;

Having taken note of the following recommendations of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the European Landscape Convention:⁹

– Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2008\)3](#) on the guidelines for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention on participation,

– Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2017\)7](#) on the contribution of the European Landscape Convention to the exercise of human rights and democracy with a view to sustainable development,

– Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2019\)8](#) with a view to the implementation of the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe – Landscape and democracy: public participation,

– Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2021\)](#)... with a view to the implementation of the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe – Landscape and responsibility of stakeholders for sustainable and harmonious development;

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

⁹. See also the following Recommendations: [CM/Rec\(2014\)8](#) on promoting landscape awareness through education; [CM/Rec\(2015\)7](#) on pedagogical material for landscape education in primary school; [CM/Rec\(2015\)8](#) on the implementation of Article 9 of the European Landscape Convention on Transfrontier Landscapes; [CM/Rec\(2018\)9](#) contributing to the implementation of the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe: creation of public funds for landscape; [CM/Rec\(2019\)7](#) with a view to the implementation of the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe – Landscape integration in policies relating to rural territories in agricultural and forestry, energy and demographic transition.

Considering the provisions of the Lausanne Declaration on “Landscape integration in sectoral policies”, symbolically adopted on 20 October 2020 by the representatives of the States Parties to the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe;

Considering the importance of the landscape with regard to food, urban planning, energy and health issues, and the need to face the challenges resulting from climate change, the disappearance of living species, water and air pollution, the degradation of agricultural and forest soils, and the artificialisation of land;

Considering the seriousness of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has affected the whole world since 2020, and the lessons to be learnt from it;

Noting that this period of pandemic has only reinforced a strong social demand for landscape;

The stakeholders below undertake to work to promote landscape quality with a view to sustainable and harmonious territorial development.

...

*