

Bjørn Casper Horgen
Deputy Director General
Department for Planning
Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation

Norway and the landscape convention

In Norway, the Ministry responsible for Planning have organized a landscape group with the main ministries, since landscape is a theme for many different sectors. It is important to link the convention to the ministry responsible for planning, and to the planning act. Since landscape in the convention's meaning is wide and crossing many different sectors, the legal implementation should be linked to the overall law for planning, area management and community development, not to a sector specific law like nature protection act or cultural heritage act. Of course cultural landscape and natural landscapes are very important, but the goal should be a more holistic view on landscape.

The main thing is, however, that the responsibility for landscape must be linked to the planning processes, and that it is established clear responsibilities for cooperation between authorities. The law for landscape should be superior to the sector laws.

The Norwegian Planning and Building act entered into force in 2009, and we have some experience. The main problem is knowledge in the municipalities to use new tools. The cities are growing fast –Oslo fastest in Europe – and the pressure from the private developers are huge. Building living houses is the fastest way of earning money in Norway, better than oil. So you want to build higher and bigger, no matter the consequences. And for climate, this can be good. But not for the landscape. At the same time people are moving to cities, they need to have second homes in the mountain or in the coast. So, the pressure there on landscape is also increasing. But, even if things are taking time, I'm sure landscape is today much more discussed, much more focused because of the convention and the requirements in law. So, I think it is very important to have landscape legally established in a way binding the planning authorities and

municipalities to take landscape in consideration, as an integrated part of the planning system and the planning processes.