

**16th Council of Europe Meeting of the Workshops
for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention**

Landscape and transfrontier cooperation

Andorra la Vella, Andorra, 1-2 October 2015

Discussion Round Table: Workshops 4-6:
Landscapes, spaces for cooperation
Transfrontier landscapes to be revealed
Landscapes for living together

Dear Chairpersons,

Dear colleagues,

- Having heard very interesting examples, approaches and policies to transfrontier cooperation with shared landscapes, questions of identities, economic challenges, joint research projects and case studies, I would like to make some remarks from a cultural perspective.
- In several presentations we have heard about the need for cultural co-operation, sustainable territorial development and social cohesion, also as a prerequisite for democratic governance in culture. It is this interface of globalization and local initiatives that offers a great potential for developing people's identities with their landscapes and their heritage and for the protection of cultural diversity – even more so in cross-border regions.
- In these regions we are very often experiencing that people are leaving rural regions, the infrastructure of which also deteriorates because there are no more young people there. Particularly in rural areas, **access to art and culture** is often difficult. However, we know that a dense cultural programme highlights the quality of life and contributes massively to the attractiveness of a region. By safeguarding heritage for local communities we foster the people's identity, their sense of belonging and their well-being.
- We will only be successful if we safeguard cultural and natural heritage together! Examples have been presented from Lake Ohrid Region (Albania-Macedonia), from Colombia (LALI) and from the North Sea (Marinescapes). Transfrontier cooperation

brings benefits to the regions on both sides of the border. Let me mention two more examples from my country:

- Ms Konkoly Gyuró has spoken about the transfrontier landscapes between Austria and Hungary. Some of you will know that **Fertő / Neusiedlersee Cultural Landscape** is a common **UNESCO World Heritage** of our two countries. The Fertő/Neusiedler Lake area has been the meeting place of different cultures for eight thousand years. We find an extraordinary landscape and a remarkable rural architecture of the villages surrounding the lake as well as several 18th and 19th-century palaces. The inscribed property, located on the Austrian-Hungarian border, is not only characterized by diversity but it has also maintained, in terms of both natural and cultural aspects, its landscape, its socio-economic and cultural features, as well as its land-use forms. A management plan for the whole property has been developed and its implementation is supported by the joint Management Forum.

- Another very active border region has developed in the north of Austria with the Czech Republic. Ms Macaria has presented the project of the European Green Belt. The *Bundesländer* at the border have had several **major cross-border provincial exhibitions** exploring the constant change in the cultural, economic and social relations between the two countries from a cultural point of view (2013 “*Old Tracks, New Paths*”, 2009 “*Divided - Separated – United*”). Another major exhibition demonstrated the history of “*Bread and Wine*”. Bakers, accommodation providers, regional economic farms and wineries have joined forces to "Region partners" and welcomed the guests of the Exhibition 2013.

- Rather than having single projects we should aim at a constant cross-border cooperation on a regular basis in order to make it sustainable. The project partners can learn from each other, inspire each other and empower each other. Another success story are the **European Heritage Days** that have been celebrating Europe's cultural heritage in 50 countries each year since 1991 by putting new cultural assets on view and opening up historical buildings normally closed to the public. The cultural events highlight local skills and traditions, architecture and works of art, but the wider aim is to bring citizens together even though there are differences in cultures and languages. This year's “Tag des Denkmals” in Austria had the motto “Fire and Flame” and took place last weekend on 27 September. As in previous years, we have organized cross-border events in cooperation with the European Heritage Days in the Czech Republic.