

Ukraine

Mr Ievgen IVANENKO, Research Fellow, Sector of Landscape Research, Institute of Geography, National Academy of Science,
on behalf of

Mrs Olena LEGKA, European Landscape Convention National Focal Point, Chief Specialist, Division of Land Resources, Directorate of Natural Resources Protection, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources

The perception of the term “landscape” can be seen from the legal, scientific and social point of view.

Ukrainian legislation incorporates international agreements, so it accepts the definition of “landscape” from the European Landscape Convention (ELC), which was ratified by Ukraine in 2005 in order to take effect in 2006. On the other hand it contains series of national laws, where we also find the application of this term. However it is not defined precisely. One law (of “State Program for Organization of National Ecological Network of Ukraine During 2000-2015”) defines the term “natural landscape” as “holistic natural territorial complex of genetically homogenous and similar natural conditions of localities, which were formed due to interaction between the components of geological environment, relief, hydrological regime, soils, and biocenosis”. Another law, which was accepted but not approved, the Law “About Landscapes” defines “landscape” as “holistic compound natural territorial (geographical) complex, which is the result of action and interaction of natural and/or anthropogenic factors and consists of interacting natural or natural and anthropogenic components and complexes of the lower taxonomic rank”. Other national laws use the term “landscape” with a similar meaning, which doesn’t refer to “the area, as perceived by people” from the ELC definition. This is the main juridical difference.

Scientific meaning is also differs. Ukrainian landscape science is deeply rooted in Soviet tradition and closely related to Armenian landscape science. Its mainstream defines “landscape” as “territorial complex, in which different natural or natural and anthropogenic forces and bodies are interacting”. All vertical strata of a landscape are extended to a length from tens of meters to kilometers depending on a scale. It is a crucial difference compared to ELC definition, which seems to consider mainly the surface layer.

From the social point of view people in Ukraine normally would speak about the landscape in a context of a wide open space. The main feature they recognize is the relief of the surface. It is interesting that there is an alternative term in Ukrainian language – “краєвид” (kraievyd), which is quite similar to polish “krajobraz”. It was used in science about a hundred years ago, but since then it is completely edged out by the “landscape”. “Краєвид” is definitely refers to “the area, as perceived by people” from the ELC. The appliance of this term instead of “landscape” may benefit the understanding of the ELC idea.

Though the understanding of the term is not precise, it doesn’t mean that landscapes in Ukraine are not protected, managed and planned. To perform it different instruments may be used. For example:

- Nature Reserve Fund of Ukraine (national protected area system), especially biosphere reserves, national nature parks and regional landscape parks. They are established with the aim, among others, of promotion the sustainable use of a land. They occupy about 4 % of Ukrainian area.

- Ecological Network. It is legally based on the corresponding law since 2000. Ecological Network covers over 40 % of the country’s area, but yet not implemented into practice.

- Landscape planning. The pilot project was elaborated with a support of German colleagues and their experience during 2010-2014 for Cherkaska oblast (one of the 25 regions of Ukraine with the total area of 21000 km²). The results are the program, the framework plan and the plan for a local level.

There are many problems in Ukraine considering landscapes management: financial, executive, legislative etc. The one specific problem is public awareness and the feedback. Usually problems related to landscapes and the environment are proposed to be solved at the international level from the point of view of all humanity and global perspective, because “nature doesn’t know borders”. But what if the solution will be proposed on the lower level, strengthened by the patriotic

feelings? It may be patriotic in a broad sense, not concerning only a country and a nation, but also a region, a city, a village. At this scale it is more likely to be aware and to feel the feedback. It also seems more natural for the human being to be concerned about the problem at a scale, which can be perceived directly by the sense organs.

So the perception of the term “landscape” for successful ELC implementation and the scale, at which ELC idea is more likely to be applied, are seems to be good questions for debate.