



# STEERING COMMITTEE FOR CULTURE, HERITAGE AND LANDSCAPE (CDCPP)

Strasbourg, 18 February 2021

CEP-CDCPP-WG (2021) 2E

## WORKING GROUP ON THE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION

### *LANDSCAPE AND RESPONSIBILITY*

#### **Working document**

*Written consultation procedure of the Working Group  
“Landscape and responsibility”*

*Secretariat document of the Council of Europe  
Democratic Participation Department*

*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**”.*

*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, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 27 September 2017 recommends that the governments of States Parties to the European Landscape Convention:*

- “a. consider the importance that quality and diversity of landscapes has for the minds and bodies of human beings, as well as for societies, in the reflections and work devoted to human rights and democracy, with a view to sustainable development;*
- b. frame landscape policies in the long term, so that they take into account the common surroundings for present and future generations;*
- c. develop landscape policies throughout the entire territory, so that people can enjoy their surroundings in dignity and without discrimination;*
- d. ensure that landscape policies respond to the ideal of living together, especially in culturally diverse societies;*
- e. take into account the landscape issue in the actions taken to promote good governance and democratic citizenship, notably through awareness-raising, training and education;*
- f. apply the principles of human rights and democracy in landscape policies;*
- g. guarantee the right to participation by the general public, local and regional authorities, and other relevant parties including non-governmental organisations, with an interest in the definition, implementation and monitoring of landscape policies;*
- h. include the “landscape”, as defined by the Convention, in indicators of sustainable development relating to environmental, social, cultural and economic issues;*
- i. implement the principle of non-regression in order to ensure that landscape policies can only be subject to continuous improvement.”*

*Cf. Publication Council of Europe Landscape Convention: Contribution to human rights, democracy and sustainable development, Council of Europe Publishing, 2018.*

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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 as 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 designated its members: Mrs Anita Bergensträhle-Lind (Sweden), Mrs Hanna Jedras (Poland), Mrs Sanja Ljeskovic Mitrovic (Montenegro), Mrs Liv Kirstine Just-Mortensen (Norway) and the representative of the Council of Europe Conference of INGOs, and entrusted the Secretariat to designate experts.

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The Working Group thus set up is invited to act on these requests and to prepare a draft Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on Landscape and actors responsibility, to be presented at the 11th Council of Europe Conference on the European Landscape Convention, Strasbourg, 26-27 May 2021.

Taking into account the work previously carried out, an initial version of the draft Recommendation was prepared by the Secretariat of the Council of Europe in collaboration with Mr Régis Amboise, in his capacity as Council of Europe Expert, on the basis of the Explanatory Memorandum prepared by Mr Amboise in the same capacity.

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*The draft recommendation “Landscape and responsibility of stakeholders for sustainable and harmonious development” and its explanatory memorandum were prepared within the framework of the work of the Council of Europe for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention. Their purpose is to put into perspective the concepts of landscape and responsibility, in accordance with the Preamble of the Convention.*

A written consultation procedure being applied by the Secretariat of the Council of Europe, the members of the Working Group on “Landscape and responsibility” are invited to send their possible proposals for amendments (in track changes mode), by 5 March 2021, to the following e-mail: [maguelonne.dejeant-pons@coe.int](mailto:maguelonne.dejeant-pons@coe.int).

An online meeting, in which the members of the Working Group will be invited to participate, will be held on 15 March 2021 in order to finalise the work.

The 11th Council of Europe Conference on the European Landscape Convention, Strasbourg, 26-27 May 2021 will be invited to adopt the draft Recommendation and to take note of the draft memorandum, in order to transmit them to the Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP), which will in turn be invited to decide to submit the texts to the Committee of Ministers for adoption (draft recommendation) and for noting (draft memorandum).

**Draft Recommendation CM/Rec(2021)... of the Committee of Ministers to member States 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**

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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:<sup>1</sup>

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

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<sup>1</sup> 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;

*Considering* the provisions of Resolution A/RES/70/1 adopted by the General Assembly 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 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 landscape can constitute a powerful unifying and operational factor for meeting the requirements of sustainable and harmonious development, in particular considering climate change issues;

*Wishing*, in accordance with the provisions of the preamble to the convention, to harness the “responsibility for everyone” to ensure landscape quality;

*Recommends* that the governments of the States Parties to the convention call on national, regional or local authorities to:

1. Take into consideration the following measures:

- *Incorporating 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 incorporate 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 appropriate responses to the major challenges of sustainable development, it is necessary to promote the use of landscape policies as tools working for spatial and urban planning policies, cultural, environmental, agricultural, social and economic policies and other policies, in particular energy policies, that are directly or indirectly linked to landscape.

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

As landscape concerns everyone, individuals are all responsible for it at their own levels. 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*

Achievements such as those presented through the Information System of the Council of Europe Landscape Convention and the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe show that it is possible with landscape policies 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.

2. Draw up “Sustainable development and landscape charters” for those involved in promoting sustainable development, while referring to the principles of the European Landscape Convention. Such charters may be modelled on the appended text.

## Appendix

### to Recommendation CM/Rec(2021)... of the Committee of Ministers to member States with a view to the implementation of the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe

*Example of*

#### **“Charter on sustainable development and landscape”**

*for stakeholders involved in promoting 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](http://www.coe.int/Europeanlandscapeconvention)*

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*This charter is intended to serve as a source of inspiration for public authorities which wish to draw up their own charters to increase awareness among civil society and private organisations of the value of landscape and of the role they could play in shaping changes in landscape with a view to sustainable and harmonious development, with reference to the principles of the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe.*

*Its approval is part of a voluntary process. It is not intended to be legally binding on its signatories or to have financial implications.*

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*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 on 25 September 2015 “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals<sup>2</sup>, seeking to “realize the human*

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<sup>2</sup> Sustainable Development Goals:

- 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 industrialization 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, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss;

rights of all”, balancing “the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental”;

*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:<sup>3</sup>

- 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, and

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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;

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

<sup>3</sup> 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(2019)8 with a view to the implementation of the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe – Landscape and democracy: public participation;

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

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## **Draft explanatory memorandum to the draft recommendation**

### **Landscape and responsibility of stakeholders for sustainable and harmonious development**

*Prepared by Régis Ambroise,  
Council of Europe expert*

#### **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, they gradually led to 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 leading to accelerating climate change. All these trends now pose serious threats to world peace and to the future of humankind. They 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”.<sup>4</sup> 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 landscape<sup>5</sup> 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 which has been highlighted at international level by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) since 1988 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.”

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,

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<sup>4</sup> Excerpts from the Preamble to the European Landscape Convention.

<sup>5</sup> 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.”

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.”<sup>6</sup>

It is necessary to take account of the landscape dimension so as 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 climate dimension as a vital aspect of individual and social well-being. It is a real “tool” for sustainable development policies and for combating climate change in particular. The scale of the changes to be made means that all stakeholders involved with landscape must commit themselves to this end, in a fully 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 particular areas and of social life more consistent and efficient so that the necessary ecological, economic and cultural transition processes can be undertaken in a manner that is more participatory, more effective and quicker. They are based on the methods set out 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

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/climate-change> (accessed on 23 January 2021).

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 put in place 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, thereby 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, while 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, in particular 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 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 sections below describe how landscape approaches applied to sector-specific policies set out in Article 5.d. of the European Landscape Convention improve the responses to some of the SDGs from then UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### **Agriculture and landscape**

Farmers were long 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 being called into question because of their negative impacts on the environment, the climate, health and landscapes. 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.<sup>7</sup> Some involve promoting agroecology, which is a way of devising agricultural production systems that are based on the functions performed by ecosystems. Agroecology aims at making maximum use of nature as a production factor and maintaining its 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.

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<sup>7</sup> 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.”

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. For instance, landscape approaches can propose that the size and shape of land parcels be redesigned in line with the agronomic potential of the soil so as 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 are able to perform several functions: increase in crop and livestock yields, production of wood and energy, increase in biodiversity, 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 environments 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 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, which 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 rarely have 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 and 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 they will very often 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, their relief, their climate, the renewable materials available in the surrounding regions, their built heritage and their 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. By involving them 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, landscape approaches offer greater chances of successfully completing transition processes with the support of residents. 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 UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is to “ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all”.<sup>8</sup>

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. They get the public involved in changing their lifestyles for the sake of greater shared well-being.

The new infrastructure necessary for producing renewable energy (solar, wind, water, wood and biomass, etc.) now forms part of landscapes meeting with either enthusiasm or rejection. It falls mainly to local elected representatives to undertake landscape approaches to ensure that the implementation of local energy policies is backed up effectively. 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 concerned themselves to determine the “energy mix” best suited to the natural and human features of their regions. They help to produce principles for the proper location of developments in relation to local landscape characteristics on the basis of field visits and discussions and negotiations which they bring about between operators, elected representatives and the public.

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 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 and energy, etc.; they are also used in procedures that involve

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<sup>8</sup> “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.” (<https://www.agenda-2030.fr/odd/odd7-garantir-lacces-de-tous-des-services-energetiques-fiabiles-durables-et-modernes-un-cout-46>) (in French, accessed on 23 January 2021).

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 which the European Landscape Convention relates to. 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 the general public, local and regional authorities and other parties with an interest in defining and implementing landscape policies, it is useful to promote facilitation methods based directly on landscape.<sup>9</sup> 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 quality of surroundings. Field visits are therefore real working tools. Arranging them takes time but that is beneficial in terms of enabling the participants to feel responsible for the outcome of the work and jointly commit themselves to implementing the projects agreed.

### **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 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 must also be provided for elected representatives as such. All

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<sup>9</sup> 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.

these training courses must deliver teaching that brings home the importance of addressing landscape as a tool for the transition processes that need 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.

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