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COUNCIL OF EUROPE LANDSCAPE CONVENTION  
CONVENTION DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE SUR LE PAYSAGE



## COUNCIL OF EUROPE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION

### 10th COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONFERENCE ON THE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION

*Conference organised under the auspices of the Presidency of Finland  
of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe*

Council of Europe  
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#### *Intervention*

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#### **The importance of landscape education**

As you know, in October 2018 an important and very interesting workshop, regarding the subject “landscape and education”, took place in Tropea. I do not want to draw here the conclusions of the workshop, because that has already been done within broad discussions at the end of the Workshop, but rather to briefly stress the importance of the subject.

The significance has already been pointed out by the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe, which states: “Each Party undertakes to promote [...] school and university courses which, in the relevant subject areas, address the values attaching to landscapes and the issues raised by their protection, management and planning”.

Landscape, thus, cannot any longer be consigned, as often happens, within geography subjects, in order to gain a knowledge of the different characters of the planet territories, through the description of “landscape types”. Instead it is necessary to aim at a more general “landscape education”, intended as one among the aspects of sustainable development education.

In order to reach this goal it is possible to define objectives, methods and tools to develop teaching steps leading to an interdisciplinary approach. In a globalised era it seems crucial to point out the peculiarities of the different territories and therefore it is increasingly necessary to start from the local landscapes knowledge, and from the living context where they are located.

If landscape is the mirror of society, a theatre in which human beings are at the same time actors (landscape builders) and spectators (observers, judges), landscape education for children and young people acquires an essential importance, because today’s children will be tomorrow’s adults, future builders and users of the landscape.

In this respect, landscape education can be considered within the broader realm of sustainable development education, as a path towards a balanced and long-lasting relationship with our everyday environment, with existing resources (both material and immaterial), with present and future citizens. This can happen only through the deep knowledge of territorial dynamics and an assumption of responsibility.

Awareness and responsibility are more and more solicited on ecological topics among younger generations, as shown also by the wide movement represented by 16 years old Greta Thunberg. The reinforcement and dissemination of a culture of sustainable development (as defined in Johannesburg Summit in 2002) is increasingly necessary and, towards that end, the care of landscape values plays a key role.

The dangers of the lack of a widespread landscape culture are well documented in Italy, where we have advanced and pioneering landscape protection laws, and various control systems, but all that didn’t prevent the creation of wide waste lands throughout the country, due to the absence of a widespread landscape culture and lack of awareness of the importance of its protection.

It would therefore be crucial to spread “Landscape literacy”, a basic knowledge, mainly aimed at giving the main tools necessary to “learn to see”. It is only through this kind of knowledge that landscape can be experienced with awareness. This process leads, on the long run, to an individual and collective virtuous management of the landscape.

We can define landscape education as learning to observe with new eyes the things around us, keeping into consideration at the same time the rational aspects (the objective side), and the emotional aspects (the subjective side), which are both necessary for a complete approach to landscape. Scientific-rational education and artistic-humanistic education can thus come together and complement each other in teaching programmes of landscape approach.

We can define four different intertwined directions through which we can read a landscape:

- through the tangible, natural and anthropic elements of the landscape we observe and their reciprocal relations;
- through the emotional aspects, the immaterial dimension;
- through the investigation of the origins of the specific characters of a landscape;
- through the changes occurred over a period of time.

Another important aspect is the one concerning economic dynamics. If we do not understand them, they will determine uncontrolled future changes in the landscape and, eventually, its degradation. If

we manage to comprehend them, on the other hand, we can correctly orient them towards landscape and environment compatible directions.

Teaching landscape values aims to shape awareness of citizens, and represents an investment in the future in order to reach a higher life style standard. This goal can be obtained only through high quality places for everyday life, and will grant material and spiritual wellbeing to the individuals and communities of tomorrow.

### **Bibliography**

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