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OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE LANDSCAPE CONVENTION***

***“Water, landscape and citizenship in the face of global change”
« Eau, paysage et citoyenneté face aux changements mondiaux »***

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WORKSHOP 4 - Citizenship and social participation in management water landscapes

Euxinograd – The Pearl of the Bulgarian Parks

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Dear delegates and guests,

Today I am going to present you Euxinograd as a pearl of the Bulgarian parks. When I first found out that I am going to take part in the 22nd meeting of the workshops for the implementation of the Council of Europe landscape convention “Water, landscape and citizenship in the face of global change” I have thought a long time which topic exactly to choose, because Bulgaria is rich of its mineral springs, the most of them are part of the Bulgarian balneo and spa tourism, the country is also famous with many rivers, lakes and The Black Sea. Two of the borders of my country are water borders – in the north is river Danube - it divides almost fully Bulgaria from Romania and our east border is The Black Sea. The big water landscapes have influence over the Bulgarian economy, climate, and the development of my country. But I have decided to pay your attention to another role of the water and the water landscapes, exactly the architectural-artistic role and its application and part of the park constructions. Therefore I want to introduce to you one of the best examples for this topic and to share with you only a small part of the facts, as considering the short time. I shall make you familiar with Euxinograd residence. It is built because of the beautiful landscape, which appears on the sea. This is a wonderful place, connected with the Bulgarian history and culture, served as a model for interrelation between people and natural resources at the organisation of landscape art, which places a standard for conservation of the cultural and natural landscape of Bulgaria and its inclusion in cultural and well distinguishing routes.

Euxinograd is situated 8 km north-eastern from the city of Varna, Bulgaria, on a 3 km coastline, rising high above the sea along the gulf of Euxinograd.

During the reign of Ivan Alexander (from 1331 to 1371) Genoa made first steps in front of Bulgaria to have a permission for access to the Bulgarian ports on The Black Sea. The unique natural area, on which was built the residence of Euxinograd has been inhabited since ancient times. By the side of its eastern coast at the sea were found remains from early byzantine fortress called Kastritsi.

It surrounds a small cape, which is known with its Turkish name Chatal tash which means a bisected rock. The rocky cape, on which is built the castle, surrounds from south a well preserved gulf, known with its Turkish name Soganluk.

Several hundred meters north from the port, which was established by the people of Genoa there are many healing mineral springs and the inhabitation of the place is connected not only with the trade, but also with the healing potential of the water resources. At that time the Bulgarian aristocracy was very generous in providing funds for building of individual temples and monastery complexes. The region became inhabited by many hermits and the area became a center of spiritual life.

In XVII century here came the two reverend brothers monks- Theodosii and Agapii Kantardzhievi from the city Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria, who founded there the monastery “St. Dimitar”. They used their own funds for the construction and made the owned lands of the monastery wider as building cells, fences, fountains, they planted vineyards and gardens.

After their death in the winter of 1866 and 1867, the Greek patriarchy became an owner of the real estate till after the Liberation of Bulgaria. The monastery was left by the monks and later together with its lands was given on rent. Its buildings started being used as an inn and a place for urban picnics and entertainments.

After the Liberation of Bulgaria Prince Alexander I Batenberg became the first Bulgarian Prince, after being elected by the First Great National Assembly on 17 April 1879. After becoming Bulgarian Prince, each summer Alexander I Batenberg started to visit the monastery “St. Dimitar” close to Varna. The young Prince fell in love with the Bulgarian nature and the spell of this place – the quiet crystal clear bay and its surroundings and he wanted to buy the monastery together with its lands and to build there a summer residence.

With the help of the mayor of Varna – Mihail Koloni and the Russian diplomatic agent in Sofia –Mihail Hitrovo, as well as after long talks and the blessing of the Oecumenical patriarch, the Greek municipality gifted him the monastery „Saint Dimitar” with its land. The Prince bought more land for extension of the residency. It is called „Sandrovo” from Alessandro – the name of the Prince and its short name Sandro.

The construction of the palace started the same year – 1882, according to the project of the Austrian architect Viktor Rumpelmayer. At that time Rumpelmayer was amongst the most famous architects of the aristocracy in Vienna.

The complex was built on an area of 850 decares as 550 are for the palace with the park. The other part includes a port, beaches, farm buildings /breeding pools, winery, greenhouses, cultivated land, fruit and vegetable gardens and many others.

The terrain, on which was built the park, is slanted to south direction, it has been completely deforested during the Ottoman slavery. The lands have been occupied predominantly by vineyards and fruit trees. Only along the river valley of Kestrichka bara river, which crosses the park to the west direction of cape Soganluk, there have existed local trees and bushes.

In 1884 by invitation of the Prince, Bulgaria was visited by the famous landscape architect Carl Eduard Pezhold, who had to develop a design for the forming of the park to the residence. The implementation of the project lasted two years. During that time he has made detailed studies of the natural planation and the local climatic conditions, which have been formed from the influence of the Black sea and Kestrechka bara river. The whole realization of the park has been frustrated by the detronation of Batenberg, but the project of Pezhold has been realized to a certain extent. The terrain has been made even, the alley system was outlined to the west of the palace. It has been planted the coniferous trees to the north of the palace and around the greenhouse.

After the abdication of Batenberg on 26.08.1886 from the Bulgarian throne through as a result of Decree of 1886, the National assembly of Bulgaria passed a law for buying from the state of all movable and immovable properties, owned by the former monarch, including the palace „Sandrovo” and the developed plan for the territory. The governmental vineyards were given on rent.

On 7 July 1887 Prince Ferdinand I, born in Vienna, Austria, was elected for Bulgarian Prince and as such he was a successor of the property in Euxinograd. He was known as a keen botanist, entomologist and philatelist.

In order to continue forming the park to the palace Euxinograd, Prince Ferdinand I invited the French landscape architect Eduard Andre, who was one of the most famous European specialists, who has made designs not only for Europe, but also for Africa and South America. He has only developed the layout. From the spring of the next year – 1890, with its realization was engaged another French landscape architect–Anri Martine, upon recommendation of Eduard Andre. The new landscape architect had to supervise the site. The volume-spatial construction is made after basic researches of the climatic conditions. For this purpose was attracted the dendrologist Noimayer from the Forest academy Tarant, Germany. During the years in the park has been selected decorative planation from all continents. Andre re-developed the central part of the park according to the French model and placed there many architectural elements under his design – metal pergola, metal bridge, decorative kiosk, and pavilion for music. The buildings of the monastery were repaired and new buildings were built for the servants of the Prince.

Generally the park has a mixed landscape-geometric composition with the participation of the different styles, typical for the park art in Europe from the end of XIX – the beginning of XX century.

From a compositional point of view the park is divided in two sectors – south-west, called a French park and “North-east”, called “English park”.

„The French park“ is realized under the design of Eduard Andre. He changed the great level difference of the terrain with two terraces. The first is located around the palace and lies on the upper level. It is a ground floor, formed in front of the terrace of the palace. In its center is placed a baroque basin with cascades, figures of cupids and pots with flowers. From both sides are arranged grass ground floors with ameba-formed box-trees and annuals, which form the central motive. In the basin swim water lilies and accent of the composition is the sculpture figure of the Ancient Roman God Neptune.

The second terrace is located 5m below the first one. The connection between both levels is by a ladder, in a centre axis of the composition and a centre axis of cape Soganluk and the panoramic view to the sea and two symmetric side platforms.

There are also other smaller decorative water elements besides the central fountain, which enrich further the composition solution for the layout.

“The English park“ is located to the east and west direction from the building of the palace and from the French garden, along the seaside. Main element in it appears the coastline alley, which follows the outlines of the slope above the sea from the east border of residence “Euxinograd“ till the beach to the west, passing close before the mouth of Kestrichka bara river. The English garden has a typical landscape composition with large open spaces, terraced plantation masses and solitaires.

The penetration of the terrain in the sea is accented by panoramic sites and architectural elements, on cape Chatal tash has been made the so called chair ”Prince’s arm-chair” with a view to cape Emine and the lighthouse of the port of Varna (there has been the favorite place for Prince Ferdinand to contemplate the sea), of cape Soganluk with the „sundial” and others.

For a reason of the long construction of the park in time as well as the ideas of the different landscape architects, who have worked in it, the composition in the historical part was developed in four periods: from 1890 till after 1962. By decree of 1893, upon a wish of Maria-Luiza Burbone of Parm, the first wife of Prince Ferdinand, the residence received the name Euxinograd, which originates from the greek name Pontos Euxeinos – a hospitable sea.

The park became full of architectural elements: sundial, greenhouses, winery, stable and garage, summer houses, bungalows, the rocks of Kaliakra cape were reinforced, water areas and others.

After the abdication of Ferdinand I in 1918, Euxinograd became a residence of King Boris the III Saksekoburggotha till 1943. After 1944 Euxinograd became a governmental residence.

The park to residence Euxinograd is the most valuable work of the landscape art in Bulgaria and it has a statute of immovable cultural value with category of „national importance“.

It is also a famous part of the heritage of the landscape art in Europe, because it is created by famous European specialists. According to the requirements of the European landscape convention, which is ratified from Bulgaria, for preservation of this landscape creation and its keeping for the future generations, a series of measures have been envisaged. They aim to preserve to a maximum extent the authenticity of the layout and volume-spatial composition and natural landscape through realization of precise conservation-restoration activities.

The Euxinograd park is a rare example for excellent combination of the natural and historically formed environment with the participation of the water and the water landscape.

Leading element in forming of the composition are the water areas and the marine landscape, as the park composition and the architectural sites, located on it, are entirely subject of the panoramic perception of the whole coast landscape.

From one hand it was sought a visual connection and on the other hand the view from the building of the palace is to the sea.

The designed water areas are skillfully put in the composition and appear a main element in it as they enrich it.

Without them the garden layout no matter how masterly has been made, wouldn't have the effect, which has been reached.

They are basic building element in a symbiosis with the architecture of the palace.

Kestrichka bara river has formed the type of plantation but it has also served as a main water source for irrigation during the maintenance of the park and often has made problems with its pouring.

Besides the central fountain in the French garden, the park comprises also other smaller decorative water elements, which further enrich the composition solution for the layout.

In the palace of Euxinograd have been signed many decrees, contracts, treaties and agreements between Bulgaria and other countries have been approved.

Residence „Euxinograd” is a preserved evidence for the way of life of the Bulgarian monarchs Prince Batenberg, Prince Ferdinand and King Boris the III Saksoburggotta, and from the period 1946-1991 also of the elite of the ruling party at that time, as the palace is nationalized and became a resort complex for the officers of the Council of ministers and the State committee of Bulgaria.

The wines, produced in Euxinograd, win many awards on international exhibitions. Here is produced also the first natural wine cognac „Euxiniak”.

This is briefly the history of the establishment and development of Euxinograd residence – a model of workmanship and professionalism, which has put the beginning and perspectives in the development of the Bulgarian landscape art.