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EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION**

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*“Water, landscape and citizenship
in the face of global change”*

*« Eau, paysage et citoyenneté
face aux changements mondiaux »*

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WORKSHOP 3: Forum of experiences – Coastal and marine landscapes

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Bosnia and Herzegovina – Pliva River in the City of Water, Rocks and Lights

Bosnia and Herzegovina is far known by its clean and untouched waters. The special characteristic of the terrain in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the presence of the great number of water streams with the abundance of waterfalls which are adorning the country's landscape. Their beauty consists of deep and steep canyons, effervescent whirlpools, docile meadows and lush forests which are reflected on the clear and calm surface of the river.

Unpolluted water is certainly one of the most important natural resources of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We can rightfully say that Bosnia and Herzegovina is the country of rivers, due to the fact that around 262 rivers flow through it. The most significant rivers in Bosnia and Herzegovina are Sava, Drina, Bosna, Vrbas, Neretva and Una.

The specificity of rivers in Bosnia and Herzegovina is also contained in the fact that they compose its natural border – Sava and Una, the greatest part with Croatia on west, Drina with Serbia on the east. Every river has its special feature.

One of the most beautiful rivers in Bosnia and Herzegovina is Pliva river, long 33 km, located in the western part of Bosnia and Herzegovina and flowing west-east. It is springing in the untouched nature of the mountain Vitorog (Sipovo municipality), and its stream is ending in Jajce, dramatically crushing down as waterfall in the Vrbas river. Natural waterbed of the river Pliva is a typical example which confirms the assumption made by A. Leopold: "Riverflows are architects of their own geometry". Special phenomenon related to the river is the riverbed and waterflow of Pliva is the fact that they are embedded in the tufa deposits which are subjected to the erosion processes.

The whole region of Jajce is rich in the natural heritage which cannot be observed separately from the constructional. These two forms are intertwined. The phenomenon of tufas and tufa sediments on the parts of the water streams of Vrbas and Pliva has its special role. Apart from that it represents a part of the unique composition, this belt has its great value as a natural rarity.

Jajce is the City of Water, Rocks And Lights

On the coasts of Vrbas and Plivalies one of the most beautiful cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina – the city of water, rocks and lights, the royal city, museum under the clear sky, the city with 29 national monuments – the city of Jajce.

The magnificent, 21-metre high waterfall, among the 12 most beautiful on the world is adorning the city centre making Jajce unique in the world. The great historical significance and ambiental value, important archaeological findings and architectural objects and extraordinary natural beauty are placing Jajce among the units of special importance from the standpoint of the heritage protection. The set of material and natural values represents inimitable qualities and is the result of human living in special social, historical and cultural conditions. Spatial composition and separate realizations have an emotionally-artistic value to them (Jadric, 1970). The importance of such values is reflected in the fact that Jajce was one of the first units imagined in the project "Revitalization of the historical nucleus of Jajce", already underway in 1970 (The Institute for the Protection of the Cultural Monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, responsible project manager Radivoj Jadric).

The historic urban area of Jajce constitutes a self-contained spatial and topographical entity. There are two key factors in the appearance of Jajce. The first is the powerful impact of the morphology of the terrain and natural features such as rivers, cascades and waterfalls, the tufa cliffs of sculptural form, etc., and the interaction between the natural and the built environment. Here the natural environment is so potent a factor that everything that is built and set in that dramatic scenery acquires a specific local expression. Here, in fact, it is the natural features that constitute the genius loci. The most powerful feature of the town is thus the waterfall, which has become, over the centuries of evolution of the structure of the town, the place with the most powerful meaning in the town.

The other factor is the unbroken sequence of material expressions of human action of a high cultural level and historical significance over the long period from the Roman Empire to modern history and, which is even more significant, the long, unbroken trajectory of urban history, which makes this one of the oldest towns in Bosnia. The continuity, overlap and encounter of the different historical layers contribute to the complexity and richness of both the structure and the shape of the town.

In the 15th century Jajce was the seat of Bosnian kings, and in 1461 in Jajce the last Bosnian king, Stjepan Tomasevic was crowned. Archaeological findings, discovered in the very centre of the town are pointing out that people lived in this area even 6,000 years ago. Especially important are findings

from the Roman age, in the city itself, as well as in the whole area. This includes the Temple of the god Mitras and necropolis from the 4th century. In the year 1527 Jajce became an integral part of the Turkish empire. During Ottoman rule, many educational and public institutions were built in Jajce. Their rule was replaced by the Austro-Hungarian monarchy in 1878, and then the biggest hydropower plant in this part of Europe was built right on the soil of Jajce, and the waterfall provided the city with lights as early as the 19th century. Jajce is also famous for the fact that in 1943 Tito's Yugoslavia was established there on the Second meeting of AVNOJ.

Zones under protection

The border of the zone under protection is conditioned by natural values of the water stream, tufa rocks and general configuration of the field, as well as compositional elements, in its uniqueness of natural conditions and human intervention, as well as ambiental and architecturally urbanistic characteristics.

The central rocky boulder with the citadel dominates above the city and could be seen completely equally from all surrounding positions. Northwards and westwards one can observe the silhouettes of the peripheral walls, dominated by the central citadel.

Residential zone within the walls represents the zone of the greatest ambiental value. Here we note the presence of the most valuable objects which represent the main characteristic of the urban area. South-eastern slopes of the city, all the way to the Skolska Street and the street of Hrvoje Vukcic Hrvatinic. Apart from this, it also encompasses the complex behind the Church of St. Marija and the Tower of St. Luka, as well as the part within the northern peripheral wall and the frame of streets in front of the Banja Luka gate as well as the isolated complex in front of the Travnicka gate and above the waterfall. If certain activities are taken, the whole complex could be well preserved.

The Varos zone

Several objects of high architectural value are also located within the complex, it is a natural continuation of Jajce outside the walls and represents its bond with water and the neighbouring slope. The objects constructed in this zone were done according to the measures of the objects within the walls. Roads, physiognomy of the composition and details that could be found on certain objects, also respect the laws we discover within the city.

The great contribution to the environment of the historic city of Jajce and its immediate surrounding is given by the complex of twenty watermills on the river Pliva, located between the Big and Small lake, which are represented by the extraordinary group of traditional objects. This environment has a notable natural, geological and scientific value which is impossible to separate from its constructional heritage.

The Agency for the Cultural and Historical Heritage and the Development of Touristic Potentials of the Jajce City, in the effort to better promote the city, decided to reconstruct and again start up several watermills on Pliva which are used for the grinding of the organic flour.

Current state of the site

The greatest destruction, degradation and devastation of historic structures happened during the war (1992-1995). Almost every valuable residential object was significantly destructed or reduced to ruins. Tough post-war economic situation, complex social and political opportunities, changed national and social structure of population, indifference, low level of knowledge and awareness about the values of cultural and historical heritage, as well as many harmful impacts which influenced their rapid declension. Postwar, semi-chaotic „reconstruction“, illegal rather than legal, introduced the architecture inconspicuous dimensions, heights, materials, construction and architectural elements. The cultural and historical surrounding was directly and additionally degraded by new materialization and newly composed shapes.

In such circumstances, the development of the Regulation plan of the cultural and historical nucleus with the buffer zone is the urgent task of the society. The municipality of Jajce has started developing the Regulation Plan of the historical zone in Jajce in 2007 and has assigned this task to the Faculty of Architecture in Sarajevo – the Institute for architecture and urbanism.

The main principles and goals set out in the Regulation Plan are the following:

- identify the need for archaeological research;
- protect and save all the elements of the uniqueness of the cultural and historical architecture in its shape and form;
- protect and save all the ambiental, spatial and natural values and meanings of the environment and its landscape;
- secure respect and application of the contemporary conservatory and restorational principles and techniques;
- lower down the spatial, architectural and stylistic discord caused by the construction of inappropriate objects;
- identify physical structures which are necessary to remove;
- set up the guidelines for any future construction in the protected area;
- secure the active protection of the cultural and historical nucleus of Jajce, with respect to all its development phases. active protection also encompasses the integration of the cultural and historical nucleus into the contemporary life, namely such distribution of functions which can allow the affirmation of all important values of the area;
- secure a consistent integration into the policies of the economic and social development and urban, as well as regional planning on all levels,
- raise the awareness about the meaning of the cultural and historical heritage in Jajce;
- point out the need for constant supervision of the protection and revitalisation of the area.
- separate regulatory plan for the Historical Zone of Jajce with the buffer zone by the Institute for Architecture and Urbanism)

Nevertheless, Jajce, is the place where extreme beauties intertwine with human heritage which will remain one of the examples for learning about the strength of the ambient as well as its need for safekeeping. At the end, we will recall the sentence by Aldo Leopold, which properly reflects his principle of „land ethic“.

“A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.”

Aldo Leopold, American environmentalist

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