



*Landscape and sustainable development:  
challenges of the European  
Landscape Convention*

# **Landscape and sustainable development**

## **Challenges of the European Landscape Convention**

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*Paysage et développement durable – Les enjeux de La Convention européenne du paysage*

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Photo: Jean-François Seguin

“On the Long Strand, an Irish beach, pebbles unite in their diversity as if in homage to the European Landscape Convention”

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## Preface

The European Landscape Convention was adopted in Florence (Italy) on 20 October 2000 under the auspices of the Council of Europe, with the aim of promoting European landscape protection, management and planning, and organising European co-operation in this area. It represents the first international treaty to be exclusively concerned with all aspects of European landscape. It applies to the entire territory of the parties and covers natural, rural, urban and peri-urban areas. It concerns landscapes that might be considered outstanding as well as everyday or degraded landscapes.

The convention represents an important contribution to the implementation of the Council of Europe's objectives, namely to promote democracy, human rights and the rule of law and to seek common solutions to the main problems facing European society today. By taking into account landscape, cultural and natural values, the Council of Europe seeks to protect Europeans' quality of life and well-being in a sustainable development perspective.

The Council of Europe has undertaken a work aiming at examining and illustrating certain fundamental aspects of the convention: Landscape and

- social, economic, cultural and ecological approaches;
- individual and social well-being;
- spatial planning;
- innovative tools;
- identification, assessment and quality objectives;
- awareness-raising, training and education;
- international policies and programmes; transfrontier landscapes;
- public participation.

This book has been produced thanks to the Council of Europe experts' reports and to the results of the workshops which have taken place on the implementation of the European Landscape Convention and have enabled specific examples and cases to be used to illustrate the same themes.<sup>1</sup> The various resulting publications may thus be examined together.

Our thanks go to Messrs Michel Prieur, Yves Luginbühl, Bas Pedroli, Jan Diek Van Mansvelt, Bertrand de Montmollin and Florencio Zoido for the excellent quality of their contributions to the debate.

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1. Documents T-FLOR 2 (2002) 18 and 18 addendum and T-FLOR (3 (2002) 12. Also see Council of Europe Publishing, European spatial planning and landscape series, 2005, No. 72 and 2006, No. 74.

The reports were presented to two Conferences of the Contracting and Signatory States to the European Landscape Convention, held before the convention even came into force, the first on 22 and 23 November 2001, the second on 28 and 29 November 2002 and to the conference held when the convention came into force, on 17 June 2004.<sup>2</sup> The representatives of governments and of international governmental and non-governmental organisations who attended these conferences thus had the opportunity to discuss the relevant issues and to take the first steps towards optimum implementation of the convention.

The main feature of the European Landscape Convention, which is wholly dedicated to landscape, meaning landscape as a whole, is the way it in which it calls for the landscape to be valued as a product of history, the fount of cultural identity, a heritage to be shared, and a reflection of a Europe of multiplicity.

The task ahead, an ambitious one, is hugely important to the future of our land and our surroundings. We wish every success to those who are committed to it.

Maguelonne Déjeant-Pons  
Head of Spatial Planning  
and Landscape Division  
Council of Europe

Enrico Buergi  
Chair of the European Landscape  
Convention Conferences,  
2001-2004

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2. Documents T-FLOR 1 (2001) 19, T-FLOR 2 (2002) 27 and T-FLOR (2004) 15.

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### 3. Landscape and spatial planning policies

*Florencio Zoido Naranjo, expert to the Council of Europe*

*“Each Party undertakes: [...]*

*d. to integrate landscape into its regional and town planning policies [...]*”

*Article 5.d of the European Landscape Convention*



## Introduction

Under the European Landscape Convention each party undertakes to “integrate landscape into its spatial and town planning policies”.<sup>77</sup> This textual reference forms the basis for this report, whose drafting also takes into account other convention provisions, the convention’s Explanatory Report and working documents from the First and Second Conferences of the Contracting and Signatory States, as well as the main spatial planning documents from the European Conference of Ministers responsible for spatial planning (CEMAT-CoE) and the European Union.

The importance of the relationship between spatial planning and landscape policies is clearly established in the convention, as the following extracts show.

- Article 5.d lists regional planning policies first, followed by other policies, some cited specifically and others generically for their “possible direct or indirect impact on landscape”.
- The Preamble to the convention places this new legal instrument among various international texts devoted, amongst other things, to spatial planning policy.
- Thus the Explanatory Report points out that the convention “is part of the Council of Europe’s work on [...] spatial planning”.<sup>78</sup>
- The same report gives pride of place to spatial planning among the policies that Contracting States must “systematically” develop.<sup>79</sup>
- In paragraph 49 on the distribution of responsibilities for landscape between the different levels of administration in each State – depending on their legislative systems – the need to co-ordinate these levels within spatial planning policy is specifically mentioned.
- Last but not least, spatial planning is also mentioned in the commentary on training specialists in landscape theory and practice.<sup>80</sup>

In addition to these specific references, other provisions in the convention and its Explanatory Report suggest a growing need for a closer relationship between spatial-planning and landscape policies, although without neglecting the development of other links with equally important policies (historical heritage, environment, etc.). The main comments here are the following:

- the many references to and mentions of territory in a document on landscape clearly demonstrate that although territory and landscape are two separate concepts and realities, they cannot be dissociated;

77. Article 5.d of the European Landscape Convention.

78. Paragraph 36 of the Explanatory Report of the European Landscape Convention.

79. Paragraph 50 of the Explanatory Report of the European Landscape Convention commenting on Article 5 of the Convention.

80. Paragraph 53.b of the Explanatory Report of the European Landscape Convention.

- the scope of the convention, which covers the Parties' entire territory, makes territory the common subject of spatial planning and landscape policies;<sup>81</sup>
- the convention's application to all types of natural, rural, urban and peri-urban areas, whether land or water – including inland waters (lakes and ponds) and marine areas (coastal waters and the territorial sea) – and to all landscapes (outstanding, everyday and damaged) establishes an additional link with spatial planning, which is inevitably associated with different areas and the relationship between them;
- lastly, spatial planning and landscape policies converge in that they help to fulfil extremely important common objectives: a satisfactory quality of life for residents in all areas, and balanced and sustainable spatial development.

The main European documents on spatial planning stress the need to take account of landscape. Thus the European Regional/Spatial Planning Charter, in its first "specific objective" for rural regions, calls for "conservation and management of the natural landscape" in these areas. Similarly, the Guiding Principles for Sustainable Spatial Development of the European Continent (GPSSDEC-CEMAT – Recommendation Rec(2002)1 of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers to Member States) lay down more detailed spatial planning measures for cultural landscapes. The same standpoint has been adopted and enlarged by the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) when it demands creative management of these landscapes as part of an integrated heritage and nature policy for a territory.

The above remarks cover not only specific provisions but also more general ideas. They apply to both spatial planning and town planning for two main reasons: on the one hand, "spatial planning" and "town planning" are very frequently cited together in the above-mentioned provisions; on the other, spatial and town planning, even if on rather a different scale, are based on the same theoretical paradigms and have similar conceptual and methodological foundations. Moreover, they are frequently implemented in association in a co-ordinated framework, although we may note differences in administrative guidelines and allocation of powers in European regions and States. However, in this report we shall use the term "spatial planning" in its broadest sense, including town planning, as signifying reflection, planning and action for all areas – whether urban, rural or natural – and always with the object of achieving a balanced distribution consistent with the activities, land use and values associated with the various parts of a territory.

Spatial planning is a scientific discipline, as well as both a political and an administrative practice, which can be applied on different spatial scales. The relevant political institutions act either on their own or by sharing the same area, which is organised at different territorial levels. The way in which spatial scales and political levels intersect in Europe is particularly complex and varies considerably from country to country. This report discusses the four spatial scales conventionally known as continental, national, regional and local, together with

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81. Article 2 of the European Landscape Convention.

four levels of political action: international, national, sub-national and local. With the aim of setting out the main ideas and general issues relating to each of these spatial scales and political/administrative levels, the report will focus on the developing relationship between landscape and spatial planning on the national, regional and local scales and associated political levels in terms of the Convention's provisions as originally drafted under the auspices of the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe.

### **3.1. European spatial planning practice**

Territory is an essential element of any polity. As such, it is bound up with a society's population, culture and norms of co-existence. Calls for reform or social improvement have frequently included references to the type of spatial organisation desired. The term "utopia", as a supreme aspiration or "unattainable place", literally reflects the importance attributed to territory in human desires. More practically, the concept of territoriality has been used throughout history to determine the spatial limits of laws and legal rules.

Over its long history, Europe has provided many examples highlighting the importance of territory, with both negative and positive consequences. Thus European contributions to the development of spatial planning policies have been many and authoritative at international level. The way in which the debate on planned cities, the actual construction of urban settlements of different sizes with different functions, land settlement, land clearing, then fragmentation, and lastly the design of core areas and transport systems have evolved in Europe demonstrates a growing capacity to control the physical areas where population and various human activities are located. More recently, town and spatial planning has become highly developed in Europe, being established at all political levels and on all spatial scales. Since the end of the Second World War, with the reconstruction of a large part of the continent, planning on a regional scale has undergone uneven development. However, spatial planning practice is constantly improving throughout Europe, thanks in part to the methodological guidelines and contributions from the Council of Europe in connection with CEMAT-CoE and the European Union.

Spatial planning, including town planning, has always been regarded as an indispensable public practice whose main aim is co-operation between the various branches of government participating in use of land for the basic objectives of any society, such as life, peace, social well-being and sustainable development. Traditionally, the specific goals of spatial planning have been elimination of spatial imbalances, the physical relationship (or connection) of places in a given area with each other and the outside world, rational use of renewable and non-renewable natural resources, and the reclamation of damaged or derelict areas. These goals may also translate into the need to give each area, whatever its scale, the spatial systems and structures allowing, on the one hand, internal cohesion within an area and its integration into larger areas, and, on the other, identification within such areas of

pockets of diversity or inequality requiring special arrangements to preserve their values or correct differences that are unacceptable in any democratic scheme of co-existence. A more recent version of these objectives can be found in summary in documents from the Council of Europe (such as the Guiding Principles for Sustainable Spatial Development of the European Continent – Recommendation Rec (2002) 1 of the Council of Europe’s Council of Ministers) and the European Union (European Spatial Development Perspective – ESDP), such as the need to achieve sustainable and balanced spatial development. We shall discuss below the role that landscape can play in achieving these objectives, as well as, conversely, the functions that may fall to spatial planning policy with respect to landscape protection, management and planning.

The above-mentioned spatial planning objectives, expressed in various ways, are valid for all spatial scales and all policy levels. For each possible situation they must take account of various processes and primary causes, specific procedural and methodological approaches and the range of options for implementation and assessment (content, normative, cartographic, etc.).

In practice, spatial planning may be pursued by various authorities, although it is often assigned to the highest body in the political apparatus at the different levels, but its objectives must be shared by the various policy fields or departments whose measures have direct or indirect repercussions on the territory. In any case, the practice of spatial planning requires social participation and co-ordination between authorities: vertical, horizontal and transverse. Horizontal co-ordination on a continental scale ensures the coherence of national measures and, in each of the States or at other political levels, consistency of objectives and the territorial effect of sectoral policies. Vertical co-ordination must ensure both that general interests are protected and that the most concrete decisions about an area can be taken at the levels closest to the public. Transverse co-ordination allows a complex approach to spatial planning matters that embraces the various non-governmental and non-political players, encouraging public participation and social creativeness.

The local plan is the instrument of small-scale spatial planning. Large-scale planning generally employs master plans or strategies. In each case, these instruments offer a chance to develop knowledge, discussion and creative ideas about the area in question. They also incorporate the agreements concluded between the various players and legitimate interests as well as reflecting the compromises that governments have established with the societies that have elected them and which they represent. The different political levels and policy sectors have to co-operate in developing and implementing local plans, master plans and strategies for spatial planning. Moreover, spatial planning instruments are prescriptive and have to be respected by private agents and the various levels of action. Any development plan must be understood not only as an expression of the desired spatial model but also as an exploratory and strategic process, flexible in nature, developed through selective actions and adequately endowed with instruments for management, monitoring and assessment of results.

The complexity and scope of spatial planning instruments and objectives today require clarification of their links with other policies, first to give spatial coherence to policies establishing the basic principles of any society, such as identity (culture, heritage), well-being (health, education, social welfare), environment quality and sustainable development (nature, environment, economy), and second to co-ordinate sectoral policies affecting territory (in particular agriculture, transport and communications infrastructure, industry, energy and mines). Spatial systems and structures ensuring the cohesion of a given area on any scale must be established by spatial planning instruments, which must, at the very least, provide for the following:

- genuinely equal access for all residents of an area to basic services (sanitation, schools, welfare, recreation) recognised as individual and/or social rights in national, European and international standard-setting instruments;
- equivalent accessibility to the various transport and communications facilities, to knowledge, to the above-mentioned services and to economic employment and/or business opportunities and resources;
- residents' access to the natural environment and the possibility of enjoying nature undisturbed.

The specific enhancement of areas of diversity or inequality as another priority function of spatial planning will also make it possible to undertake the following:

- mark out the areas which, because of their cultural, natural, strategic or scientific value, their territorial diversity or on other general interest grounds, require a certain level of protection;
- distinguish parts of the territory which, because of their conformation or location, are subject to natural or man-made risks, in order to limit their residential, recreational or productive use;
- determine, in areas offering various options for use, the compatibility or incompatibility of these options;
- identify areas whose inhabitants suffer general inequality, in order to take priority action and eliminate unjust situations or spatial imbalance;
- address the question of uninhabited or depopulated areas as an important spatial planning issue.

For policies relating to cultural heritage, to the environment and to sustainable economic development, spatial planning can be instrumental in incorporating and giving spatial cohesion to what are perceived as their territorial constants, in order to preserve identity or cultural diversity and to guarantee environment quality, the sustainability of natural resources and their transmission to future generations. Similarly, spatial planning policy must reflect, with the precision required by each spatial scale and level of action, the localisation of all human activities, especially those with a more marked impact on an area considered as a limited resource on which other limited goods depend (water, soil, minerals, vegetation, etc.).



The presence and distribution of heritage assets in a territory have a considerable effect on the creation of territorial identities and distinctive areas, which is an important issue in a globalised world tending towards homogenisation. Natural and cultural heritage, understood as meaning both tangible and intangible phenomena connected with archaeology, history, art, ethnology, etc., is one of the resources to have gained most currency in spatial development strategies formulated over the past few years. It has helped to redefine the role of areas regarded, until recently, as stagnant or marginal (mountains, semi-deserts, cold areas, etc.) and added to requirements for the planning and management of dynamic areas (urban, coastal, intensive farming, etc.). Heritage values also help to create spatial systems and cultural trails that have an important effect on the cohesion of certain areas not only for cultural reasons but also on account of their economic effect and the incentive they provide to settle low-population areas.

Special attention must at present be paid to the relations existing between spatial planning and the environment, which sometimes involve different political institutions. The legal and regulatory background here is often complex, established through channels that are not always convergent. The primary importance theoretically assigned to sustainability must be translated into certain priority conditions for locating activities and infrastructure, allocating land use and assigning water and energy resources in various areas and places. Thus spatial planning must provide siting criteria for hazardous activities entailing pollution or catastrophe risks to help reduce their impact on local populations and natural resources; it must also take into account the spatial repercussions of an emergent environmental planning that may tend towards sectorisation – as in the case of hydraulic planning, building of wind farms, application of impact studies to individual projects, etc. Policies to create natural and environmental networks by establishing protected, sensitive and natural hazard areas and to regenerate damaged areas, etc., may have beneficial effects on spatial planning through co-ordination and co-operation between different political levels.

Initially, spatial planning was essentially economic in orientation. Although it is now less exclusively so, it cannot rule out this aspect. The important ties between spatial planning and economic processes call for different knowledge and approaches depending on the political level and spatial scale. On the continental scale in Europe the processes of economic convergence and social and spatial cohesion appear in the definition of specific development policies for large areas (urban, rural, mountainous, coastal, island, transfrontier), the allocation of structural funds to reduce spatial imbalances between the regions of Europe, the proposal for polycentric spatial development, the construction of trans-European networks and the priority given to improving the less well-equipped European corridors and to developing strategic connecting projects or links. Existing networks of protected areas on the European scale (World Heritage sites, biosphere reserves, Ramsar sites, biogenetic reserves, European Diploma of Protected Areas, Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas, Baltic Sea Protected Areas, Natura 2000 Network,

Emerald Network) link environmental (especially nature) policies to other social and economic functions.

On the national and spatial scales and political levels – complicated in Europe by various patterns of territorial organisation and spatial development – certain spatial planning policies are more frequent or common, although the further down the spatial scale we go, the greater the importance of territory-specific information. Three examples of priority policies on these scales and at these levels are:

- enhancement of each territory's endogenous development – according to its geographical situation, resources, capacity and social initiative;
- decentralisation of activities, leading to the creation of balanced urban systems, avoiding depopulation of deprived rural areas and places, and stimulating the rural-urban relationship as characteristic of a unitary society spread over a diversified territory;
- equal access to public services, infrastructure (encouraging intermodality of different means of transport) and information and communication technologies.

On the local scale (which includes joint initiatives for supra-local areas or networks by several local authorities) planning issues and objectives can differ considerably according to the size of agglomeration and type of environment (urban centres and conurbations, small and medium-sized cities, rural centres). However, in all cases there are very important common features. It is, first of all, the most immediate level of public participation in planning policy, both to defend legitimate individual interests and to protect common or general interests. It is also the lowest level of political and administrative management, responsible for the most detailed and specific spatial decisions: chief among them, determination of land use, siting of public services and facilities, permits for construction, location and starting of businesses, and identification of heritage features. Co-ordinating action with the highest political levels is particularly important for effective planning on the local scale. It may thus be useful to lay down a principle of inverse correspondence: the local authority lends the most geographical precision to mandatory acts in the common interest formulated in more general terms by higher authorities.

The greater part of European territory is rural. In developed countries with good communication networks, rurality, although still retaining its eminently agrarian function and its own cultural connotations, is increasingly becoming a mainly spatial or territorial reality. Rural areas are diversifying economically and offer basic living conditions similar to those in urban areas. Thus spatial planning, in giving practical spatial expression to other policies, has an enormously important and complex field of action. For several decades now, most of Europe's rural areas have been undergoing fundamental restructuring in terms of land use, with a wide spectrum of changes ranging from intensive farming to abandonment. These dynamics have had a decisive effect on the rural environment and its facilities, on the road system and the plot pattern in the country, on soil protection and erosion loss, on vegetation maintenance, on allocation of water resources, etc. A good

relationship between environmental and spatial policies is particularly important in rural areas, especially the most sensitive and fragile (mountain areas, river valleys, areas highly vulnerable to natural hazards or having a disturbed ecological balance for various reasons). The vitalisation of rural-urban relations, whilst maintaining the environmental quality of these areas, must be a priority for the future, in which the preservation of small and medium-sized cities and the improvement of living conditions will play an essential role.

Urban areas under redevelopment (industrial estates and port/mining areas with polluted or highly damaged soil) occupy a large amount of land in Europe. Many are of strategic value to the cities and areas where they are located, not only for economic reasons but also because of their potential for conversion into residential areas and public facilities or for improving the environment. There are many European examples of how to handle these areas in terms of redevelopment, rehabilitation or restoration. This has often produced real opportunities and improvements in certain towns, peri-urban and urban areas. Development plans, action based on a comprehensive vision of “urban policy”, European programmes such as Urban, or simply strategic individual measures, have been useful instruments for bringing about transformations with wide environmental, social and economic repercussions.

In advanced societies, the availability of leisure time has a tendency to increase for ever-larger sections of the population. The filling of leisure time with recreational or cultural pursuits or conventional tourism requires dedicated areas and increases people’s spatial mobility. These widespread wants reflect a greater measure of freedom, individual autonomy, exchange and cultural receptiveness. Tourism has branched out from its initial health and cultural activities to take in travel. After a period of relatively unregulated supply to meet mass demand, tourist pursuits have become more specialised, frequently with a requirement for sustainability (cultural, rural and natural tourism). Spatial planning on all scales must decisively influence the development of this factor, which has an enormous territorial impact. Since European coasts and islands are a particularly fragile and special environment, mass tourism has therefore begun to require special measures such as moratoria on building or use of water resources and the introduction of new environmental tax measures. The priority in achieving sustainable and territorially balanced tourism is undoubtedly to make optimum use of existing buildings and infrastructure before undertaking new construction or urban development.

One final spatial planning aspect to be taken into consideration is large-scale infrastructure and public works, whose effect on a territory is basic in ecological, economic and social terms. The improved mobility and access to goods and services brought by such infrastructure (water, energy, transport, communications) offers important opportunities for personal freedom and collective development. However, the siting of networks and individual infrastructure can be ameliorated by reducing environmental impact and management/implementation costs. It is taken as a general principle that these networks will be integrated, especially for

transport and its intermodal development. After a long period of investment in improving and widening the busiest arterial roads (motorways), it is necessary to develop rail networks and improve the secondary road systems serving rural areas and linking them to the main networks. Development of public transport in urban areas and its maintenance in low-population areas, co-ordination of land-use planning or forecasting with public transport, and the idea of the latter as part of a general strategy to encourage urban polycentrism, can be decisive factors in ensuring that infrastructure makes an optimum contribution to effective and integrated spatial planning. Some types of recent and fast-spreading infrastructure such as wind turbines and communication masts have an exceptional impact on the landscape. It is essential to establish criteria for the siting and integration of these facilities, endeavouring to lessen their negative impact and adapting their form, distribution and number to the characteristics of the areas accommodating them.

### **3.2. Synergies between landscape and spatial planning**

There are obvious relations between landscape and territory, and it is possible to create considerable synergies. Landscape is usually defined with reference to “territory” or a term with the same semantic root. An exclusively economic or biological understanding of territory as an area to be occupied or ruled and as a basic resource is enriched by viewing it as the outcome of complex interactions between various factors and as a social construct or lived space that can be improved by human activity; it takes on yet another dimension if we conceive it as a desired space. If spatial planning takes landscape into consideration it can go further towards achieving its social, economic and environmental objectives. Landscape must therefore be included in spatial planning instruments on all scales and at all levels of political action.

Landscape and spatial planning inevitably interconnect. Spatial planning proposals will always affect the landscape by transforming it, helping to preserve it or damaging it. The landscape’s wide range of meanings can offer important opportunities in terms of action and methodology for a discipline, administrative practice and policy that is still not sufficiently developed and whose guidelines are seldom shared and sometimes conflicting. Systematic consideration of landscape in spatial-planning instruments permits a genuine review of spatial models, since they can be based on a detailed understanding of each natural environment and the actual experience and perception that each society has of that environment in order, ultimately, to achieve the objective of balanced and sustainable development. The landscape development plan and study must work out the best type of relationship with spatial-planning instruments, one of whose main characteristics is their ability to incorporate varying situations in a given area, always in keeping with the legal and planning arrangements pertaining in each country or region.

Landscape is a constant living test for spatial planning, a set of signs reflecting a territory's history and the appropriateness or inconsistency of human practices in the lived space. In rural areas erosion, hillside instability, waterlogging or inadequate drainage, impoverished plant communities, abandoned land, badly sited infrastructure and buildings, etc., are often the result of inappropriate measures, which must be corrected. In urban landscapes dirt and fly-tipping, badly built or decaying buildings, inadequate development or lack of facilities and street furniture, amongst other things, underscore problems directly affecting regional and town planning.

Including natural and cultural aspects in landscape can be useful for achieving sustainability objectives, for three main reasons: first, because in traditional and indigenous cultures natural resources are treated with great care, producing highly aesthetic landscapes of great environmental significance; this fact, which has now been taken into account, enables us to understand the lived space in which a given culture has taken shape. Second, the preservation of each area's landscape values is associated with the survival of cultural models that have left their mark on the territory's morphology. Third, landscapes in their actual physical evolution can specifically and verifiably reflect cultural and environmental objectives often formulated in terms that are too vague or difficult to verify.

The inclusion of landscape in the actual practice of spatial planning fosters and facilitates public participation during both the technical preparation and the decision-making stages. The inevitable complexity of certain technical solutions to town and spatial planning issues can be made more comprehensible through recourse to landscape, whose three dimensions are more real and easier to grasp than the two-dimensional reduction of a cartographic representation that is commoner and, as a rule, the only representation required by law in spatial planning instruments. Non-technocratic information or briefing on planning proposals encourages genuine practice of citizenship, dialogue between various partners and the joint adoption of decisions. It is particularly important to ensure that the features which explain and structure a territory are understandable to young people in order to encourage their involvement in decisions. Use of currently available facilities for digital modelling of territories and landscapes on all scales may be helpful in this, since they make analysis, simulation of alternatives and virtual representation of the options much easier: the familiarity with information technology displayed by a large number of young people may be a useful way of increasing their involvement.

Systematic consideration of landscape in scientific and technical studies, which should form part of any planning process or action, can produce better-founded spatial planning and building and construction schemes. An objective understanding of the constituents, causes and natural, historical and economic processes that explain landscape will give coherence to any new site development and provide a framework of integration by also taking account of medium- or long-term structural relationships, which will give stability to future models that will be consistent with each area's environment and culture.

Similarly, consideration of landscape is a determining factor in town and spatial planning as well as in architectural and civil engineering plans and work. Integration of new structures into a landscape does not necessarily mean imitating what is already there; it may also be achieved through contrast, by creating new formal rhythms or forms, or by other methods stimulating individual and artistic creativeness in general. This assertion is based on countless structures from the past (bridges, aqueducts, temples, palaces, rural buildings) and the present (urban regeneration schemes centring on construction of a new and symbolic building). The ability to design future landscapes in harmony with nature and pre-existing human configurations is especially necessary today, since a large number of actual site developments and an extraordinary growth in urban districts with new functions are in the process of occurring while the landscape response is often inadequate. Confronting the need to create these new landscapes by releasing society from ultra-conservative attitudes and the pointless and impossible task of mummifying the entire territory is therefore an important challenge and an objective which is increasingly producing the realisation in spatial planning and landscape that another world is possible.

Landscape is a dynamic and changing reality which can afford criteria for managing spatial planning, whose most conventional methods have frequently been considered too static and rigid. Another important argument may be invoked to meet the challenge of sustainable development: it should be understood that the various elements making up the landscape have different paces of change and that this does not diminish the value of the whole but, on the contrary, increases it.

The definition of landscape quality objectives for landscapes previously identified and assessed<sup>82</sup> and their inclusion in spatial development plans provides a good opportunity of giving legislative force to these objectives, since, on the one hand, in the domestic legal systems of most European states, spatial planning instruments – principally those for the smallest spatial scales and lowest political levels – provide mandatory standards and, on the other hand, there is a feedback process, with planning work facilitating better selection of landscape quality objectives. These practices may also be helpful for managing landscapes and monitoring their development, since spatial planning and land-allocation instruments – which generally cover larger areas of government – are usually associated with development, monitoring and assessment authorities.

Inclusion of landscape in spatial planning instruments makes it easier to restore the close bonds that have traditionally existed between each society and the area in which it lives, strengthens feelings of rootedness and belonging, and makes it possible, or at least easier, to preserve territorial diversity and the individuality of place. Consideration of landscape in spatial planning instruments – in terms of both understanding a complex reality and analysing it and making proposals to improve it – is an immediate public objective and represents the possibility

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<sup>82</sup> Article 6.D of the European Landscape Convention.

of direct and daily social enjoyment of it. Consideration of landscape increases the value attached to the whole in its complexity (landscape is a whole but is not everything) while giving citizens intelligible indicators of the realities determining the quality of the area which they inhabit or would like to have.

Spatial planning – as a discipline and a political and administrative practice – implies conscious action affecting the whole of a given area. It is a matter of substituting a process of sustainable local development for successive measures taken without any overall framework. These spontaneous measures have substantially shaped today's territories, which are usually experienced as areas that are stable or with a slow dynamic of change and are converted into landscapes of identity by human perception. Their present rapid rate of change and the multiplicity of actions influencing them are the main reasons why transformations must today be evaluated in relation to the overall area, of necessity including evaluation of perceived landscape aspects, which are frequently translated into cultural features. The values attached to landscapes by local people and visitors reflect a feeling of permanence and durability in contrast to their ephemeral lives. For this reason, landscape can be an appropriate way of achieving sustainable development objectives.

These same arguments can be used to connect landscape – comparing and contrasting different territories – with territorial diversity, the latter being understood as the set of values for each place that must be preserved or promoted against the rapid spread of standardised and homogenising models. The scale and speed of current changes have brought about the uniformisation and homogenisation of a large number of rural and urban areas. Thus one of the main functions of spatial planning, as conscious action on the whole of an area, may be to preserve the distinctive features of each territory and the general sense of its uniqueness.

### **3.3. Landscape in spatial planning instruments at different scales**

The concept of scale relates the linear or surface dimension of a geographical area or phenomenon to its image. Originally associated with cartography, this idea took on a much broader signification in the 20th century, including an understanding of areas of all sizes and ranging from their main constituent elements to the causes or processes explaining them. Although the term is also used to designate other dimensions of reality, such as time, it is here considered solely in its spatial or territorial meaning because of the subject of this report. A consideration of scales entails a more methodological than theoretical approach; it is particularly suitable for the practice of spatial planning, since it distinguishes between questions that are often the responsibility of different political bodies and establishes ordered and sequential relations between them. In order to use this new methodological approach properly, it is important not to confuse scales with political levels of action, since the relationship between the two varies considerably in Europe. As

stated in paragraph 6 of the introduction to this report, we shall be considering four scales (continental, national, regional and local) and four political levels (international, national, sub-national and local).

### **3.3.1. The European scale**

On the European scale, the relations between spatial planning and landscape must be defined in general, mainly prospective, strategies resulting as much from the political organisation peculiar to each state as the varied natural and historical configurations of the national territories. The nature of these relations will depend on the geographical scales and political levels of action explained below.

The consciousness of a common European destiny, progressively moulded by states joining forces, is bolstered, among other things, by a high-quality area regarded as a common home and able to project an attractive image elsewhere in the world. The European area is not very vast in comparison with other continental areas, but it is not compact or homogeneous either; its geographical situation in the mid-latitudes puts it in several climatic zones; furthermore, its jagged coastline and the fragmentary distribution of its major units of relief (apart from the central and eastern plains) produce compartmentalisation and considerable internal diversity. The variety of European landscapes is founded on natural differences, compounded by unrivalled cultural diversity. The way in which this wealth of landscape is preserved may also reflect in future the vigour of each European society's relationship with its own territory, although this does not entail an attitude hostile to innovation or to the incorporation of phenomena or methods from elsewhere.

Landscape, inasmuch as it is considered to be a significant part of the common European heritage, can give visible coherence to the European principle "united in diversity". The idea of landscape infuses meaning into the objectives of social and spatial cohesion, which for years have been defined as priority goals for Europe: multiformity requires cohesion if it is to be united. As the philosophers Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida have noted, in Europe "the recognition of differences [...] can also become the mark of a common identity". If European landscapes are interpreted as the result of a particularly rich and expressive combination of a great natural diversity subjected to the action of peoples and societies also having diverse cultures, they become a direct spatial expression of the desire to preserve Europe's unity in diversity, the legacy of its history and geography and, according to the guiding principles approved by CEMAT in Hanover in September 2000, an invaluable background for its sustainable spatial development.

The sustainability objectives originally formulated on a global scale (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) must be specifically reflected at other spatial levels. On the European scale, landscape can be instrumental in defining, implementing and monitoring these objectives in order to strengthen them, mainly because the elements of nature form



the foundation of the enormous diversity of landscape. Thus if landscapes change, we can see an alteration in the fundamental processes and factors of European natural diversity. Moreover, systematic introduction of landscape policies, either through their inclusion in spatial planning instruments or by other means, can help to achieve effective implementation of sustainability objectives, since policies for landscape protection, management and planning will lend substance to more abstract or theoretical general ideas in each actual territory.

In order further to improve our knowledge and understanding of the realities, on the European scale we must solve the problems of landscapes of poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion, which are not confined to urban landscapes. Depopulation and ageing, combined with extremely intensive farming of certain agricultural areas and the corresponding mass influx of immigrant labour, are unfortunately in the process of re-establishing dualism and social fragmentation in quite a large number of European rural areas. For a long time, rural and urban poverty in Europe went hand in hand with wretched life spaces. Trends of opinion protested against this phenomenon, proposing decent rehabilitation. This objective was achieved after long efforts and the satisfaction of the most basic food and hygiene requirements. Depopulation, structural unemployment and concentration of immigration are gradually causing landscapes of social marginality to reappear in Europe in a dangerous spiral of decay which is leaving the successes of the latter half of the 20th century in its wake. The return of slums and their correlative, the proliferation of closed and inaccessible areas, would mean a big step backwards for Europe in political, social and cultural terms.

European spatial planning documents have identified large areas of diversity, which they have always associated with landscapes. From the European Regional/Spatial Planning Charter (Torremolinos, 1983) to the Guiding Principles for Sustainable Spatial Development of the European Continent (2000), these distinctions and associations have been enriched and deepened. The initial typology of urban, rural, mountain, coastal, island and transfrontier areas has recently been extended to include valleys, catchment basins and redevelopment areas. Specific spatial planning measures have been proposed for these areas, and the importance of taking into account their individual resources – including cultural landscapes – as the basis for endogenous development has been emphasised.

The latest European documents have studied these large areas in greater depth, developing ideas relating not only to their specificity or their characteristics in a static sense but also to their dynamics and certain phenomena binding them together and allowing new synergies to emerge. Accordingly, we should note the importance attached to the rural-urban relationship with the landscape, which rests on the idea that urban and rural areas (including mountain areas) are open to everybody and are now frequently used by all members of the public. Small and medium-sized cities, either individually or in networks, play an important role in the rural-urban relationship, since they represent a factor of continuity and quality throughout the territory. Urban centres form part of the landscape and focus its

dynamics. In the case of smaller areas (islands) or linear areas (coasts, river valleys), the rural-urban relationship is manifested by a general shortage of space and basic natural resources (soil, water, vegetation, etc.) and by the competition between the different functions. In such conditions, consideration of landscape can offer important opportunities for diversifying lived spaces and must be used to establish restrictive criteria for planning and protection.

As far as urban areas are concerned, the above-mentioned pan-European and EU documents have made polycentrism a spatial development objective to counter the growing accumulation of people and wealth at the centre of the European Union. This objective aims to strengthen urban regions, metropolitan areas and major cities in Europe outside this centre. One of the main features of Europe is the extraordinary multiplicity and wealth of its cities, especially those with a long history. The prestige of these cities is based mainly on their urban landscape and morphology. Although contrary tendencies clearly exist, the compact city takes precedence as the desideratum and most widely accepted model to counter the dispersed city (sprawl).

These ideas have come to supplement and enrich the traditional objective of regionally balanced spatial development, to which considerable effort and resources were devoted in Europe in the second half of the century and which must be maintained. Although the regional funds have not brought about economic convergence on this scale, their ability to improve the average living standard of populations in the poorest regions has been generally recognised. The most recent policies, based on the subsidiarity principle and therefore more heedful of a territory's distinctive features, should also evaluate the impact of structural funds on landscape preservation or improvement by undertaking more detailed monitoring of their effects on a territory's natural and/or cultural heritage. The often-heard criticism of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) regarding its effect of homogenising and uniformising European rural landscapes can be countered by laying down environmental and landscape conditions for granting of subsidies. But for this to occur, it is essential to have a rigorous understanding of landscape on the local and regional scales and to develop criteria for action which acknowledge the value of landscape.

Territorial cohesion in Europe requires unitary infrastructure that is able to shorten journey times. The trans-European networks have hitherto been evaluated in terms of their economic effects. They were originally proposed in order to facilitate the single market. Although their effect on landscape has also been striking, virtually no criteria for action have been developed in this field. The proliferation of large-scale infrastructure has consequences for the natural basis of the landscapes affected: changes in the drainage system, movement and displacement of large earth masses, compartmentalisation of life spaces and the mobility of woodland fauna, and the appearance of striking new landscape features accompanied, in a large number of cases, by a negative impact and a proliferation of exogenous, uniform or standardising forms. Consequently, two general criteria for action have

become essential: first, detailed consideration of the local and regional landscapes on which these major networks will have an impact and with which their designs must fit in as much as possible, and second, the need for creativity (abandoning routine and extraneous applications) and the highest degree of technical and aesthetic excellence in the engineering and architectural designs for these major public works.

Thus the existing networks of protected areas at the European scale can be interpreted as a major European infrastructure with multiple functions and as a group of areas marked by a stronger presence of nature, although all very diverse (mountain tops, relatively unspoilt coastal areas, woods, intensive grazing areas, river banks, depopulated islands, etc.), which help to preserve biodiversity and the European environment in general. This aggregation of areas of high natural value can also be regarded as a territorial network, geographically arranged so as to bring nature closer to citizens, as if it were a social facility or public service, in order that they may better understand and enjoy it. These networks would become a continental factor in spatial planning if national and regional networks at every scale or level were combined and had similar objectives. Existing networks of protected areas at the European scale also have considerable landscape significance. First, they enable a rich and extensive “collection” of European natural and cultural landscapes to be established. Second, the relative spatial continuity of these landscapes reflects the natural basis of the diversity characterising Europe. Lastly, curbing the continuing trend away from nature will make it possible to concentrate on restoring the links between European citizens and their natural surroundings.

For decades, pan-European and EU instruments have concerned mainly transfrontier co-operation and, more recently, transregional and transnational co-operation. Spatial planning has played a significant part here owing to its ability to compensate for the lack of links between isolated, or even antagonistic, areas. Transfrontier and transnational co-operation policies offer an extensive set of opportunities for more effective development of spatial planning criteria and measures which view landscape as an important factor. Thus we are seeing numerous joint initiatives by states, regions and local authorities as part of programmes relating to conservation of shared mountain tops, social-awareness campaigns on certain types of landscape, creation of open spaces, introduction of unitary management for international rivers, etc. In these examples, landscape, once again, is spatial evidence or proof of a common natural substratum and appears as a shared design for co-existence.

European institutions have traditionally devoted a large share of their energies to international co-operation beyond EU and European borders. Pan-European landscape measures are now having a certain international impact (we can already see the European Landscape Convention’s influence on American instruments, for example). Europe’s bridge function in relation to Asia, Africa and America will also be reflected in landscape protection, management and planning, either through shared situations or functions (maritime waters; permanent, seasonal

and periodic population movements; woodland fauna migrations; gateway cities; frontier areas), or through exemplary co-operation projects (restoration of historic city centres, infrastructure construction, etc.). In this context, given the current economic situation, the landscapes of the Mediterranean and of Central and Eastern Europe merit special attention.

### **3.3.2. National and regional scales**

European spatial planning on the national and regional scales reveals a wide variety of political situations and of powers (scope and distribution). States are unitary or federal, and regional divisions are always based on different ideas of devolution and division of power. Moreover, there are a large number of European states whose dimensions correspond to the local scale and others which have regions that are as large as some medium-sized states. As regards the distribution of powers for spatial planning and landscape, we again find a wide range of situations, from large states with centralised powers to other much smaller ones where these functions are regionalised. This diversity has led us to consider national and regional scales in the same section (devoted mainly to spatial issues), since they are inevitably connected with the national and sub-national political levels, with which they often coincide.

It is these political levels (in most cases the national level) which guarantee citizens equality of fundamental rights, require similar responsibilities to be given effect in their specific laws, and associate these rights and duties with a physical area by applying the concept of territoriality as mentioned previously. As regards member states of the European Union, we must not forget that spatial planning is not a policy expressly mentioned in Community treaties. Consequently, its landscape quality objectives must in each case be anchored in the corresponding national or regional legal systems.

These scales are also linked to the natural basis of landscape and the principles upon which rests its social recognition, especially those connecting it with identity, cultural heritage, ways of life, and social customs or behaviour. Although the long-standing theoretical debate on the concept of the region has not come to a clear conclusion, Europe's spatial mosaic being so intricate, the concept still best encapsulates the complex relationship between a territory's natural configuration and the cultural substrata created during historical periods in which its inhabitants depended to a greater extent on the physical characteristics of the areas where they lived. The association between landscape and space is part of a long European tradition in a number of scientific disciplines.

The European documents on spatial planning mentioned in this report link spatial planning objectives to political and administrative practice on a regional scale. At this scale we also find specific measures for landscape action in various fields, without prejudice to studies and applications at other scales and/or levels of action. The national and regional scales are therefore suitable for drawing up guidelines

or regional development plans containing mandatory landscape measures and proposals for authorities in general and lower-tier planning instruments in particular.

For an actual geographical area these scales can provide the closest match between cultural models and spatial models, these latter being designed as a synthesis of what actually exists and proposed improvements for the future. Landscape can collate these two aspects, both historically – territory as a remapping or palimpsest retranscribing the way in which it must have been shaped and used at different stages in time, and which can thus be interpreted and understood – and as a life space in the present, reasonably consistent with current needs and desired future scenarios. Inclusion of landscape at various levels of education and improvement of its social recognition play a fundamental role in strengthening the relationship between the cultural model and the spatial model.

When defining spatial models on these scales, consideration of landscape may also be regarded as a valuable technical and scientific resource, mainly because landscape reveals the structural features of a territory (geological units, mesoclimates, drainage systems, etc.) which determine natural processes and uses, especially in historical periods when technical capabilities were not as great as today. Description and interpretation of national and regional landscapes have also helped to reconstruct the causes and processes that produced them, such as property distribution and land use, settlement configuration, formation of communication networks and the location of other features on which spatial planning is substantially based.

Delineation of landscape typologies on national and regional scales must be based on the principal arrangements of a territory's structural features and the main land uses, taking into account its cultural traditions and history. The European typology produced by the European Environment Agency and embodied in the Dobris Report<sup>83</sup> can be used as a starting point, thanks to the creation of national and regional landscape atlases. Worthwhile contributions to the subject have been made in a number of European countries. This landscape characterisation must be accorded additional importance on account of its usefulness for spatial planning: the typologies thus produced must become the point of reference for differentiated rules of action for each landscape and these rules must be given legal force by including them in planning instruments.

Planning instruments on national and regional scales may also reflect guidelines or standards drawn up to ensure adequate access to all landscapes. This issue is bound up with regulation of private property rights. In the present context, marked both by a general increase in mobility on certain arterial routes (frequently congested) and by the abandonment or neglect of rural paths and trails, it is important to make access to landscape subject to general regulation and to preserve the public nature of public land and thoroughfares whose neglect could easily lead to their

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<sup>83</sup> "Europe's environment – The Dobris Assessment", European Environmental Agency, 1995.

privatisation and, consequently, the eclipse of certain landscapes. Furthermore, we must thwart the consistent tendency to convert valuable landscapes into exclusive or reserved areas.

General regulation of landscape visibility is so important that it must also be based on overall standards, since it is bound up with fundamental rights such as property and the right to enjoy certain environmental conditions (light, ventilation). Throughout Europe there are significant precedents along these lines, not only for urban areas but also for other places whose visibility and accessibility have acquired public or strategic value. Their requirements have been implemented thanks to bans on building in certain places, the establishment of preservation belts or limits, as well as the prohibition of signing and interruption of visibility ... Elimination or reduction of visibility raises similar problems to difficulty of access in terms of the perception and social recognition of landscape.

Regulation of those activities with the greatest impact on the landscape can be achieved through a combination of various policies (environmental, heritage, etc.). The siting and spatial compatibility of these activities requires spatial planning instruments. These aspects can be resolved in smaller-scale plans, but some land uses, activities and facilities have such an effect on landscape that guidelines or general standards should be drawn up in order to ensure an equal right to high-quality landscape for all citizens. This applies to, amongst other things, building development, mining activities, electric power plants and telecommunications facilities, which must have siting standards that take account of landscape and are incorporated in laws and spatial planning instruments at national and regional level.

Consideration and general regulation of unsightly activities is equally important. It is common knowledge that EC Directive 85/337 on environmental impact assessment requires landscape to be taken into consideration in the proposed siting of a number of activities. However, this list has not been drawn up on the basis of visual parameters. In the majority of European countries we are currently seeing a proliferation of activities extremely detrimental to landscape which are not on this list (car scrap yards, vast container depots, areas of building waste, etc.) and which call for general rules.

At these scales and political levels it is also possible to govern the creation of landscape trails typical of a landscape's diversity or exceptional character as well as giving some paths, tracks and roads the status of "scenic routes", thus allowing the imposition of certain minimum requirements regarding their alignment, formal characteristics and traffic (speed limits), co-ordinating safety with the possibility of admiring, crossing and making the most of the landscape. Such action can be decisive in increasing the social recognition of landscape and in fact preserving and strengthening it.

Planning instruments on the regional and national scales must also identify and demarcate (with the degree of precision required by the different legislative systems)

landscapes considered to be of general interest at the previously mentioned levels of public action, so as to avoid their being damaged or lost because local interests prevail. These instruments also include establishment of other guidelines which, with regard to landscape in particular, have to be respected and taken into account in plans and schemes on smaller scales and at lower political levels.

Transfrontier landscapes must necessarily be regulated at national level, although local and regional authorities are becoming increasingly involved in their management. This point will be specifically developed in another report, but it is worth stressing here its crucial relationship with spatial planning. In these areas spatial planning has highly important functions with considerable repercussions. There are two main reasons for this: firstly, policies traditionally covering management of transfrontier landscapes can connect areas with no continuity in their long-term functions or uses, and, secondly, landscape in these areas constitutes the basis for linking them together and is formed of features critical to a large number of social practices and activities.

### **3.3.3. The local scale**

On the local scale, landscape in its actual physical conformation and in the way it is apprehended represents a direct day-to-day experience. This scale is paramount for social participation in defining landscape quality objectives and effective consideration of the spatial forms and causes or processes that have produced the landscape. The local scale coincides with the local political level, which may be an individual unit or part of an association depending on the form of territorial co-operation adopted.

In the European area, local planning must be carried out in accordance with general landscape criteria, directives and objectives – such as sustainability, respect for territorial diversity, consideration of common heritage, etc. – stemming from regional, national and international political levels. Otherwise, at the lowest spatial level, town and spatial planning must be based on specific landscape criteria, standards and objectives which all have one thing in common: they achieve the maximum degree of detail in terms of content and procedure.

On this scale it is essential also to remember that in many places landscape is acknowledged as a primary symbol of identity and the main force of attraction or element of recognition for the outside world. A knowledge of the natural or historical causes and processes that have given rise to and explain the specific forms and features of landscape in each place is vital in order to preserve land uses, buildings and other planning options of the past – allowing lessons to be drawn for action in the present – and to understand the effects of changing or getting rid of them.

General principles such as sustainability, preservation of territorial diversity and conservation of common cultural heritage, or other specifically landscape principles such as free access to the land, better visibility, and the formal and

functional integration of landscape features must be given practical expression on this scale. Application of the following general planning criteria could help to achieve this:

- containment and spatial concentration of measures, avoiding unnecessary scattering and proliferation of landscape action;
- allocation of land uses that are not large-scale or do not cover large areas, in order to restrict processes of homogenisation, standardisation or that are inconsistent with the preservation of spatial diversity;
- preservation of free access roads and maintenance of alternative routes to conventional roads and railway lines, such as former drove ways and other rural roads, footpaths, green systems, cycle paths, etc.;
- systematic consideration of topography and visibility elements as a significant factor in routeing infrastructure and siting activities, encouraging social awareness of landscape;

an effort to find minimum-impact locations for those activities most detrimental to landscape quality;

- maximum precision and quality for all proposed measures affecting landscape, with regard not only to the transformations or changes that they will produce but also to the compensating or countervailing measures necessary to correct their impact.

On this scale it is essential to make an inventory of landscape values and conflicts that includes at least the following:

- areas and places of special interest, of landscape value (presence of endangered species, rare ecosystems) or of environmental value (rare or particularly pleasant topoclimates);
- areas or landscape features to which a collective symbolism of a religious, historical or cultural nature has been attached in either past or present;
- urban and rural areas used for outdoor social pursuits (walking, picnics, children's play, etc.);
- the most visible or striking places: these may sometimes be places that can be used to promote greater social recognition of landscape;
- territorial features or phenomena constituting special places or landmarks;
- less visible or more concealed areas, as possible locations for activities with a greater impact on landscape;
- a list of activities and facilities that are badly sited in terms of landscape, in order to change their location or get rid of them.

Analysis and evaluation of landscape, as well as proposals for its conservation or improvement by including it in local planning instruments, require a sufficiently detailed cartographic representation (in general the legislative systems of the various states and regions lay down minimum map scales for local development



plans). This landscape mapping must reflect the following for the whole of the territory under consideration:

- landscape units (understood as areas with a homogeneous physiognomy, reflecting congruous natural processes and uses);
- fields of vision and analysis of the visibility or intervisibility of those areas that are busiest (thoroughfares and corridors) or the most highly regarded socially (recreational, symbolic, etc.);
- heritage ascriptions and social preferences relating to different areas and landscape features;
- consistency of precise siting proposals with the above aspects.

Each of the areas resulting from the division of a planned space may have landscape connotations. Their fragility will be assessed and they will be given specific landscape quality objectives. In addition to other possible characterisations, attributions of fragility and/or quality will depend on the following basic categories of landscape value at least:

- natural state;
- historical nature or heritage value;
- general scenic value;
- significance as a strategic area;
- rarity or exceptional character.

In dense urban areas or population centres, consideration of landscape in the more detailed planning instruments on the local scale should analyse, assess and propose action and measures in relation to the following:

- the centre's overall image, including its silhouette and the formal texture created by the distribution of open space and buildings, paying attention, especially for the latter, to volumes and colour;
- edges and areas of contact between built space and the rest of the territory, paying special attention to the finishings on the rear sections of buildings or temporary installations attached to buildings;
- the busiest gateways or points of access to a population centre and their most representative frontages (seafronts, river banks), providing particularly careful landscaping of these areas;
- maintenance of disused buildings in order to avoid their progressive decay and dereliction;
- consideration of certain urban areas and districts as zones closed to further siting of activities with a landscape impact.

Selection of areas scheduled for future urban growth must take account of their effect on the landscape, both for the pre-existing population centre and for the rural and natural areas within the development zone. They must be precisely delineated

on the basis of stable land features or clearly defined boundaries. It is also important to maintain these prospective urban areas both formally and functionally to prevent their neglect or transformation into rubbish dumps and unsanitary areas. The urban development of these areas must take into consideration the general landscape-planning criteria and objectives already mentioned.

Consideration of the landscape dimension in rural areas could be the key to a genuine improvement of lived spaces, mainly because these areas make up the major part of the territory and also because at present they are often regarded as residual areas or have the negative connotation of “non-developable land”. It would be sufficient to distinguish various landscape units in order to have a well-defined and detailed characterisation that could be taken into account in any conversion or new siting. At present many rural landscapes are in a stage of transition or functional redevelopment and require redevelopment measures, either to adapt forms and structures that are no longer operational or else to preserve them, determine the conditions of their transformation or supplement them with missing elements. At any rate the following, in particular, must be identified:

- the rural plot pattern and its physical boundaries (dry-stone walls, hedges, etc.);
- infrastructure for land containment (terraces, tree or crop protection boundaries, etc.) and for irrigation (wells, irrigation channels, drainage pipes, etc.);
- edges and roadside plantations;
- afforestation of clearings in certain forest areas, on banks of watercourses and on slopes liable to erosion;
- disused rural structures with heritage value (fountains, pillars, sheepfolds, etc.).

It is particularly important in landscape terms to preserve the natural state of the watersheds which close the field of vision in many landscapes and which may be fundamentally altered by the siting of masts or wind turbines. Landscape planning criteria are also necessary for the natural backgrounds formed by hillsides and mountain slopes, which must be treated in keeping with their considerable landscape value, so that agricultural management (reafforestation, firebreaks, etc.) or possible new sitings (of buildings, power lines, new roads, etc.) do not distort their formal texture.

To contribute to landscape management for the territory as a whole, local planning must select areas for strategic action in the light of their objective landscape interest and the effect this action may have on social awareness and responsibility with regard to the landscape. For this purpose, the following areas may be of great value:

- the areas that are most striking on account of their natural qualities or cultural attributes, for example those with precious ecosystems, historical city-centres/ places, etc. Although progress has been made in protecting such areas, there still remain many areas with similar characteristics in Europe for which measures must be taken;

- city outskirts that have become landscapes of vulnerability and social exclusion. These are places where measures to improve the form and facilities of the living space can be decisive in producing a new regenerative compromise between residents and public officials;
- action relating to landscapes that have been damaged or considerably degraded by production-related activities – disused refuse dumps or quarries, derelict and polluted industrial or port areas – very often has far-reaching effects owing to its force of example, to the extent that it increases recognition of landscape in general;
- much-frequented social spaces with inadequate contextualisation or little internal formalisation – rural recreation areas, recreation centres that have sprung up in isolated outlying areas, etc. – in many cases require more careful landscaping, which can also have an important impact in raising the awareness of large sections of the population and especially young people;
- identification and development of scenic routes and viewpoints selected for their clear views and their ability to reveal the wealth and diversity of landscape, as well as – if appropriate and as far as possible – their associations with other social symbols or collective values that increase their scenic value.

Because of their (usually negative) impact on the landscape, advertising and signing merit special attention. Their regulation is generally the responsibility of the local authority, although not always (in the case of main roads, national parks and monuments, etc.). Regulating them in relation to the landscape through local-authority rules and including them in planning instruments can provide a useful overall meaning for activities which are at present sporadic or inadequately conceptualised in local management. Local-authority control of advertising offers the possibility of reconciling the collective right to landscape with regulated use of the landscape for private purposes.

The territorial repercussions of local-authority decisions often reveal serious incongruities of planning in adjacent areas (differences in protection levels, sudden changes in amount of infrastructure, etc.). Landscape highlights these inconsistencies, and it may also represent an opportunity for consultation owing to its value in understanding more general processes and making the best solutions more apparent. Some landscapes shared by local authorities are also interregional and transfrontier landscapes; these present a special opportunity for co-ordination between authorities with the force of example, and for developing bottom-up experiments in a territory that is unique for all the authorities but is also a life space and day-to-day landscape for its inhabitants.

On this scale social participation takes on its full meaning, since citizens are defending immediate interests (individual or collective) and try to avoid direct adverse effects. Experiments in participation relating to a complex and dynamic idea of a space (not only voluntary and creative but also standardised or regulated) are increasingly frequent, since it is as important to define the desired elements

and features of the life space as to develop the means and methods of dialogue and consultation making them possible.

Finally, we must stress the importance of landscape in local development, both directly, as a source of business and employment, and as an indirect factor in an overall positive trend towards a differentiated image which contributes to the objective of achieving an individual identity in the development process. The fact of having a high-quality landscape encourages action by the local community (entrepreneurs, non-governmental organisations, individual citizens, public officials, etc.) for improvement and development. Spatial planning instruments on the local scale (whether issued by one authority or a group of authorities) guarantee the best options and provide the most effective level of responsibility for successfully making landscape a way of achieving sustainable local development.