



*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.¹ 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.

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 2004.² 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

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

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5. Landscape and identification, assessment and quality objectives

Yves Luginbühl, expert to the Council of Europe

“ C. Identification and assessment

1. With the active participation of the interested parties, as stipulated in Article 5.c, and with a view to improving knowledge of its landscapes, each Party undertakes:

- a.i) to identify its own landscapes throughout its territory;*
- ii) to analyse their characteristics and the forces and pressures transforming them;*
- iii) to take note of changes;*

b. to assess the landscapes thus identified, taking into account the particular values assigned to them by the interested parties and the local population concerned.

2. These identification and assessment procedures shall be guided by the exchanges of experience and methodology, organised between the Parties at European level pursuant to Article 8.

D. Landscape quality objectives

Each Party undertakes to define landscape quality objectives for the landscapes identified and assessed, after public consultation in accordance with Article 5.c.”

Article 6 of the European Landscape Convention

Introduction

This report presents the political framework within which the implementation of the European Landscape Convention is being applied and cites the thoughts that have been put forward regarding terms of landscape identification and assessment, and the formulation of landscape quality objectives. Natural and cultural resources are only two of many themes that affect this and bring together factors of proposed and existing methods for the implementation of the convention, regarding these landscape identification and assessment objectives, and the formulation of landscape quality objectives.

5.1. Identifying and assessing landscapes, and formulating landscape quality objectives: a new political framework

For some decades now, the identification and assessment of landscapes and the formulation of landscape quality objectives have been included among the tasks that public authorities have set themselves within the framework of landscape protection policies and, more recently, within the framework of land management policies. The European Landscape Convention nevertheless ushers in a new political context. This latter, which is defined by the major principles by which the Council of Europe abides, actually specifies that these tasks must be assumed on the one hand within the context of the exercise of democracy and, on the other, that they must contribute to sustainable development, in other words, to long-term reproduction and to access to, and a fair share of, natural resources.

Henceforth, identifying and assessing landscapes and formulating landscape quality objectives can no longer be carried out using methods that were current when it was considered that the landscapes involved were outstanding and extremely picturesque ones. These days, the challenge is quite different: the European Landscape Convention lays down quite clearly, in its area of application,⁸⁹ that it applies to “the entire territory [of the Parties] and covers natural, rural, urban and peri-urban areas. It includes land, inland waters and marine areas. It concerns landscapes that might be considered outstanding as well as everyday or degraded landscapes.” So all types of landscapes are concerned, be they outstanding or everyday landscapes with local populations, landscapes in which local people live their daily lives and make their daily movements, or which they alter through their activities.

Furthermore, the exercise of democracy integrates both landscape identification and assessment methods, and the formulation of landscape quality objectives, in

89. Article 2 of the European Landscape Convention.

so far as it is now an established fact that not all landscapes encompass the same significance for one and all, and that each landscape has different values attributed to it by groups of people who do not have the same aspirations; involved here is a crucial challenge which presupposes both the acceptance of differences, and the fact of lending a ready ear to others with regard to what is special and what is commonplace.

In other respects, the need to include the implementation of the Convention within the framework of sustainable development has consequences in terms of the skills and knowledge that must be brought in. It is no longer just a matter of producing knowledge which has to do solely with landscape forms – as was long the case – and then applying it to programmes, but also of putting together the various factors for understanding the social, cultural, economic and ecological functioning of landscapes, and thus grouping together what makes it possible to grasp the complexity of the processes that go towards their creation, so as to make them available to forms of political action and programmes, that is, landscape protection, management and planning. Here, though, there must be no question of confusing the way the landscape works with the way ecological and environmental processes work. The landscape is here understood in the sense of the definition given by the European Landscape Convention in Article 1, namely “an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”. So the landscape is here akin to the living environment, but cannot be altogether likened to it. Landscape identification and assessment methods will thus definitely take ecological processes into account, as well as the social, cultural and economic processes which are part and parcel of their production and their development, and are part of the way they are perceived.

Following these preliminary remarks, we must now specify what we mean by landscape identification and assessment, and by the preparation of landscape quality objectives, natural resources, and cultural resources – terms which all feature in the actual wording of the report’s title.

5.1.1. Identification

Identifying an object means specifying its distinctive features. Identifying landscapes thus means embarking on an operation consisting in observing and examining them with a view to defining them through all their diverse distinctive features. The first task to be addressed thus consists in defining the contours and specifying the internal features of the different types of landscapes, and characterising them both in the present state of their identification and in their dynamics, that is, by specifying the evolutionary processes affecting them. Hitherto, this work has been carried out on the basis of classic geographical criteria founded on an analysis of homogeneous characteristics and helping to affirm that the space presenting identical features in aspect, form and composition supported a certain type of landscape. But for the past 20 years or so, research has innovated and developed new identification and assessment criteria, which have been tried and tested in

different experiments, and have shown their operational nature. Research has actually promoted the multiplicity of meaning of the term landscape, which means it is no longer possible to stay within a sole method of landscape identification and characterisation – other methods have to be applied. The European Landscape Convention, in its various principles and guidelines, implements these different criteria, in terms of the recognition of specific cultures in the European regions and the necessary participation of the local populations concerned.

The second issue raised is that of scale. It is admitted that landscapes can be examined on several scales: some countries have drawn up landscape maps on the scale of their national territory, but it is just as possible to identify landscapes on the scale of a smaller territory, a commune or village, for example. Methods may still be founded on identical principles, but the accuracy required will not be the same and the larger the scale (and so the smaller the territory), the more demanding the accuracy will be; in particular, the more knowledge of the values attributed by local populations concerned is essential to take into account the challenges of managing the territory under consideration.

The third issue involves the skills of the “operators”, that is, of the people involved, whose task is to proceed to make this identification. If, ordinarily, these “operators” are essentially specialists carrying out these tasks of identification, the European Landscape Convention points out that the local populations concerned must take part in all the tasks involved by its implementation. So it is important that these local populations concerned now take part in this task of landscape identification, which may give them a better grip on the landscape definitions and descriptions to be drawn up, because they will be able to recognise themselves therein.

5.1.2. Assessment

The assessment issue is being hotly debated by the scientific community involved in landscape study. It has to do with the arguable value attributable to a landscape, which depends essentially on the status of the people defining this value. It is above all the aesthetic value which is at issue, and this may vary depending on the social position of the people involved. The debate is now different, because, as has been pointed out above, it is admitted that the value of a landscape may depend on individuals, and the issue has now changed, in passing, from that of an intrinsic landscape value to that of a relative value in relation to the individuals concerned. It is nowadays admitted that it is important to specify the identity of the people asserting the value of a landscape.

For some, it is possible to get around this issue by likening the assessment of a landscape to a definition of its features. This position means that a landscape has no value in itself, but that it is the features of a landscape which help to assess it. Through this position it is possible to avoid the hierarchy of landscapes which obviously poses a tricky problem arising from the subjectivity of the judgment. Among the various people holding to this position, some advocate the idea

that the assessment of a landscape can be set forth depending on the degree of transformation it is undergoing or the degree of transformational pressure to which it is exposed. This degree is tantamount to a form of hierarchy which is established and ranges from the most stable landscape to the most transformed landscape, starting from an initial state, which is the state noted during observation. This position culminates in a qualitative landscape classification: stable landscape, landscape subject to low-level pressure, landscape subject to high-level pressure. Needless to say, this method comes up against the problem of attributing a value to these three states, which actually depend on value judgments, because it is in fact possible to reckon that a landscape subject to high-level pressure is in the process of degradation. This brings us back to the initial question. It would seem in any event that the position of those taking part in the workshops is oriented towards the refusal of both a landscape hierarchy or a ranking between different landscapes. It is on the basis of knowledge of the value or values attributed by the people concerned and in particular by local people, that the assessment can be established, whatever the method used.

Finally, it emerged during the workshop discussions that the assessment of a landscape is only possible through the definition of its values and not of its value – positions which are actually very different. A landscape may in fact be attributed several values or several types of values: utilitarian values, aesthetic values, symbolic values, etc., attributed in different ways depending on the people or groups of people involved. For example, one and the same agrarian landscape may offer utilitarian and symbolic values for a group of farmers and aesthetic values for a group of non-farmers. The assessment of a landscape is thus regarded as a complex process, in which a set of values is compared, brought together and complemented, and the task whose aim is to define the quality of a landscape accordingly consists in giving perspective to these differential values attributed by this or that group of people, in relation to the challenges posed by its transformation.

5.1.3. Landscape quality objectives

The explanatory report of the European Landscape Convention posits that a “landscape quality objective consists, for a specific landscape, once it has been identified and assessed, in precisely listing the features which the local people concerned wish to see recognised for their living environment”.

It specifies, furthermore, that the parties are required to “set quality objectives for the landscapes which have been identified and evaluated, and in doing so to consult the population concerned. Before any measure is taken for the protection, management and planning of a landscape, it is essential to make clear to the public what objectives are being pursued. These objectives should be laid down, explained and announced by the competent authority concerned after the general public and all relevant interests have been consulted. The objectives may be set within the more general framework of a policy conducted by the territorial or central

authorities concerned. The decision setting the objectives should state clearly the special features and qualities of the landscape concerned, the general thrust of the policy for that landscape, and the specific components of the landscape to which protection, management or planning will apply. It should then say by what means the objectives are to be achieved.”

So the formulation of landscape quality objectives is a complicated task which represents a decisive moment in the shift from mobilising knowledge to acting upon it. Its purpose is both to foresee and anticipate the future in the long term by consulting the local people concerned.

It seems then that:

- the formulation of landscape quality objectives has to be seen in a context of the knowledge of the facts, in other words of the dynamics underway which transform landscapes;
- this formulation can only be achieved with a determination and concern to plan for coherence between what a future landscape will be and a system of values attributed to landscapes and that this coherence must nevertheless embrace developments which this value system will certainly undergo;
- the action must be incorporated within the principle of social equity, which is to say that there must be access to, and socially shared use of, natural and cultural resources.

5.1.4. Cultural and natural resources

Depending on the countries, cultural and natural resources can or can not be dissociated. They are presented separately below, bearing in mind that natural resources can also be considered as cultural resources due to the symbolic or aesthetic value that societies attribute to them.

a. Cultural resources

It is crucial to remember that cultural resources are not solely landscape factors which are ordinarily the object of shared social recognition and which have often been protected by virtue of this value, such as civil, religious and military monuments. In the various European countries, the meaning attributed to these resources as cultural heritage has actually spread to other factors which help to map out the lines of national and local cultures, material and immaterial alike. It is thus important to identify them in the landscape identification and assessment phase in order to include them as basic factors to be incorporated in active measures. Local cultures have a special interest here, in so far as landscape quality objectives embrace the aspirations of the local people concerned.

These factors might also include material elements represented by vernacular constructions, or those not involving habitat, agricultural use, industrial or artisanal use, communicational use, and even those various uses combined in one and the

same building. We might also take into account non-material factors such as areas of local expertise, specific techniques used in productive activities, certain beliefs, etc., which have taken shape in the landscape.

b. Natural resources

Just as for cultural resources, the discussions at the meetings referred to did not specifically broach the issue of defining natural resources, which would seem to be even better defined than their cultural counterparts. The basic issue raised with regard to natural resources has to do with their reproducibility. The need for sustainable development actually means that decisions about actions and programmes, in other words about landscape management, protection, and planning, must be able to guarantee the long-term reproduction of their natural resources for future use, even if this is only hypothetical. A resource that is not being used at a given period, and in particular when landscape identification and assessment studies are not being carried out and when landscape quality objectives are not being formulated, may subsequently be of interest for a future period which society does not yet know about. It is thus important not to overlook those natural resources which, to all appearances, at the moment when decisions are being made, do not have any evident economic, symbolic or cultural use, and it is also necessary to raise the issue of their importance for the future. It goes without saying that this future use cannot be envisaged with any certainty, but it is essential to treat it hypothetically.

The second major issue raised by a consideration of natural resources has to do with equitable access and division. All objectives must thus take a close look at the conditions in which the various social groups making up the local population have access to and can share these natural resources, for individual and/or collective uses. Water comes to mind, as do soil and mineral resources and flora and fauna, resources whose rational and economic use contributes to the make-up of landscapes and to the living environment and well-being of local people.

To sum up, contributing to social well-being is indeed the objective of all the tasks envisaged as part of the implementation of the European Landscape Convention. It is not the landscape as object that the convention is trying to manage, protect and plan with a view to its improvement, but rather the landscape seen as a complex component of the living environment of European populations: it is in this respect that it contributes to their well-being.

5.2. Identifying and assessing landscapes, formulating landscape quality objectives: efficient and innovative methods

Many methodological proposals are put forward to do with the theme of landscape identification and assessment, and the formulation of landscape quality objectives.

This report presents some methods developed in other contexts in scientific and technical circles.

5.2.1. Landscape identification and assessment methods

We shall not make a distinction here between identification methods and assessment methods, because certain specialists consider that assessment and identification stem from one and the same operation. The distinction between identification and assessment will be made on the basis of the method used. The issues which are under discussion in the scientific community and in the community of field workers concern, on the one hand, the time for landscape identification and assessment and, on the other, the methods used, and in particular the sources of knowledge to be mobilised.

a. The time for landscape identification and assessment

This issue may seem incongruous in relation to the actual importance of the task to be undertaken. It is nevertheless under discussion, because it refers to the linkage between landscape identification and assessment operations and active programming, in other words, operations involving landscape management, protection and planning. Some technicians reckon that the two types of operation should be simultaneous or sequential, in other words that identification and assessment can only be carried out prior to planning and protection operations; others think that the first type of operation can be carried out independently of the second, thus helping to obtain a base of knowledge about landscapes that can be used by all the people concerned, whether they are political, scientific or technical. It is, incidentally, this solution which is now being applied in several countries (France, Spain, Great Britain, and Norway in particular), by way of “landscape atlases”, which are kinds of inventories encompassing the knowledge about different types of landscapes and their dynamics.

It would seem possible to be able to draw up such inventories (akin to atlases) on several scales (national, regional, local), which would form organised, spatialised and illustrated databases in which the different types of landscape present and delimited would be hallmarked by various criteria. These “landscape atlases” or landscape databases would be made available to planners and the local people concerned, after an exercise in validation and after public inquiries aimed at the facilitation of their appropriation by these people.

This inventorial construct would allow technical experts to draw on the knowledge they need during their formulation of landscape quality objectives and landscape development plans. The fact is that some of these technical experts greatly regret that the time they spend looking for the knowledge necessary for their work is not being used, and better spent, in the field. This is an argument which bolsters the need for preparing these landscape atlases or databases.

b. Methods

The question of scale

The various experiences recorded at Council of Europe meetings shed light on the range of scales: several European countries have carried out work on a national scale, such as the United Kingdom, Norway, Spain, Portugal, and Slovenia, in particular. Others have become involved in works on greater regional and local scales, such as France and Belgium. A landscape identification and assessment project undertaken at national level does not prevent a movement downstream leading to an inventory based on dovetailed scales.

Norway, for example, has identified 45 landscape regions and 444 sub-regions, and 276 valuable cultural landscapes. The United Kingdom has done likewise, proceeding by way of simultaneous dovetailed scales. So it is obvious that there is no favoured scale, *a priori*, but that the scale also has to be worked out in relation to objectives.

Methods known as landscape state identification objectives

These have been applied for a long time and in particular by geography, which has been the discipline most oriented towards landscape identification and description. These methods are based on the delimitation of areas and spaces containing landscapes regarded as homogeneous in terms of their composition. These landscapes have usually been called “landscape units”, sometimes and more rarely “landscape entities” and even more rarely still “landscape ambience units”.

Identification of the boundaries of these landscape units involves various and usually complementary methods.

Field observation

It can only be carried out accurately on a large scale. It has the advantage of helping to grasp the nuances and aspects of landscapes viewed at ground level.

Use of cartographic data

- existing cartography, be it topographical, geological, hydrological, involving vegetation maps, etc.
- use of aerial photographs: this helps to understand the continuity, discontinuity and composition of landscapes, the way they are divided up, and it also helps to locate constructed elements and plant features. These aerial photographs may be in normal colour, or in infra-red, designed to distinguish broadleaf vegetation and coniferous vegetation, in particular, and certain types of land use which show different temperature colours.

– satellite photographs, and in particular the cover resulting from the Corine Land Use Cover database which helps to detect spatial units which are of homogeneous composition.

In this respect, there is an ongoing debate about the relevance of aerial imagery for landscape identification and assessment. Some specialists reckon that aerial photography does not represent landscape photography because of the overhead perspective. It would seem that we can abandon this position. It is in fact possible to consider that if the overhead shot does not encompass the visual aspect of a landscape in the usual sense, the sense in which it is commonly understood, it makes it possible to generalise observations made on the ground.

Use of statistical data and various other indicators

Quantified statistical data help to describe spatial distributions which may help towards an understanding of landscapes; for example, population density which is an indicator of the presence of buildings; or the density of grassland areas which appears in certain censuses and which may record a more or less verdant aspect of the landscape.

As for aerial photography, the use of quantified indicators should not be regarded as being directly relevant for landscapes. It is the interpretation that may be made of them in relation to the state of a given landscape, already evaluated by field observation and mapping, which may help to specify this state. Incidentally, the question of indicators deserves to be further developed towards a consideration of meaningful data to do with social demands regarding specific landscapes. The number of second homes in certain regions can actually be interpreted as reflecting the attractiveness of particular landscapes. But it is as well to be very cautious in the way we use these quantified data. If we take the same example of second homes, this phenomenon might indicate a social attraction for the landscape concerned, but it might also describe a high density of empty dwellings, thus inexpensive and indicating an attractive supply of accommodation which possibly has no relationship with the landscape itself.

Use of archaeological data

This method may be helpful for attesting to past human occupancy on the one hand, and it may be considered in terms of heritage as well, but it may also be useful for analysing the ways in which activities are distributed in relation to the morphology and certain elements of the landscapes such as watercourses and slopes. Even if it is still often difficult to interpret these data, they may point to methods for using resources and protecting human constructions in the face of natural risks such as floods, landslides, avalanches, etc.

Identification and delimitation of protected areas

This identification is crucial if there is to be proper action. Generally speaking, the status of the territory should be the object of specific research, helping those involved to become acquainted with the restrictions on land and enabling them to take decisions adapted to this status.

Use of visibility criteria

Some methods propose drawing up charts and maps of visible areas based on particular viewpoints and itineraries. This method, furthermore, has given rise to computer techniques based on the use of digital field model data (data digitising contours). But this technique can only be used for rural areas with little construction and does not take vegetation into account. In addition, in urban environments, it cannot be used and fieldwork is thus called for.

State of landscape components

This is a method based on observation making it possible to locate landscape components which are sufficiently recurrent to represent typical repetitive “factors” in the landscape in question. For example, one operation helped to identify the following elements:

- factors associated with surface water;
- land boundaries (hedges, low walls, etc.);
- sites of towns and villages;
- roadside landscape features;
- memorial sites;
- heritage buildings;
- edges of protected monuments;
- entrances to towns and villages;
- public places in towns and villages;
- communal spread.

The location and description of these factors helps to inform local people in the areas concerned about the forms which they see and pass daily, and raise their awareness about their importance, and the changes, which these structures undergo.

Methods known as landscape dynamics identification methods

Landscape identification must in fact encompass the dynamics in question by the same token as it encompasses the state of the landscape at a given moment. There is no such thing as an unchanging landscape, and this applies in particular to landscapes created by human activities and, therefore, where people live. It is therefore crucial to be acquainted with the types of changes underway in order to ground actions and landscape quality objectives in a relevant basis of knowledge

of factors likely to change. Knowledge about these changes can be accessed in several ways.

Use of landscape development tendencies

Landscape development tendencies can be evaluated using the indicators already mentioned which, because of the progress of computer technology, make it possible to draw up maps locating developments; for example, positive population evolution reveals pressures which may weigh on the landscape as a result of the building which it will inevitably entail. But building changes can be measured and mapped with the help of other indicators such as building censuses – this possibility, needless to say, being based on census methods differing from country to country. In a more general way, it would seem essential to assess these changes by taking into account the major sectors of activity which, by their movements, contribute to the evolution of landscapes; it is also important to measure the processes relating to:

- urbanisation;
- processes involving development and modification of farming and forestry practices;
- processes involving the use of natural resources (materials in the ground, and water in particular);
- processes enhancing and making best use of the building heritage;
- major infrastructures;
- processes involving economic and tourist development;
- biological and physical processes playing a part in landscape evolution,

to mention just the most important. These trends may, furthermore, be verified by field observation, by locating the signs which give a physical indication of them in the landscape – for example, a young coniferous plantation may be the sign of a trend towards reafforestation.

All these processes can be conveyed by appropriate maps which help to locate the areas most concerned and least affected. It goes without saying that the cartographic establishment of these processes depends on the scale and on the units of statistical census.

Updating collective and individual project data

These development processes actually represent the sum of collective and individual projects, be they public or private. It might be enough just to assess or map development trends. But in fact, statistical indicators merely measure past processes and can be interpreted in terms of trends. Some of these development projects and projects involving the execution of works, and especially collective projects and projects of a certain size, slip through these censuses. It is thus important to identify and locate them in order to formulate forward-looking

landscape knowledge. They can essentially be identified by surveys taken with competent administrative departments and local authorities.

So-called “subjective” methods

What is actually involved here is methods attempting to shed light on the subjective data of landscapes which cannot produce any quantifiable evaluation and which stem from aesthetic, phenomenological and symbolic values. These methods are based on the hypothesis that landscapes offer values which are attributed to them either by the local people (cf. paragraph 5.1.2 Assessment), or by artists and writers who have recorded the aesthetic and symbolic attributes of landscapes in their works. These differing types of values may in fact be very different and sometimes very divergent, but, on the other hand, they may also reinforce each other. The methods used to identify these values stem from different techniques.

Data taken from art production, travel guides and illustrations

These sources of landscape representation are a way of understanding the relationship between part of society and the landscape at a given moment in history. Needless to say, these illustrative products are socially delimited. They are not regarded as representing aesthetic attitudes to the landscape by the population as a whole, but certain groups of artists have managed to be ahead of society as a whole in this line of thinking, and acted as harbingers of change in the way they conceived the landscape, which was not yet the way the majority did. One of the best examples is the French Impressionists, who had a forward-looking vision of industrialised French society during the 19th century, and who gradually discovered the French countryside and the French Riviera as ways of escaping from the restrictions of working and city life. This movement went hand in hand with a markedly new social structure marked by the formation of the middle classes, who were able to be tourists and thus embark upon the age of leisure.

In the same way, old postcards represent not only a way of rediscovering certain landscapes from the past, but above all of understanding how the landscape was thought of and what values were attributed to it.

This immense corpus is thus an exploratory, heuristic source of landscape and of historical attitudes to it and it is quite obviously related to a period and a part of society: painting, printing and lithography, postcards, travel guides, literature, tourist advertising posters, and photography can all be used to get to know how a landscape was conceived of at a given period. Analysis is nevertheless difficult and must be undertaken by specialists, and not made in a literal way, but with interpretations which refer these images to their social, spatial and historical context.

The same observations can be made about contemporary productions with images stemming from advertising and promotional documents for regions and countries. These images form a body of data which scientific analysis has long neglected, but

which are nowadays regarded as interesting sources for understanding landscapes and the values attributed to them.

Data deriving from the way local people perceive landscapes: the issue of values and the scale

Value system: universal or non-universal values

This is a tricky question which could be examined with regard to the existence of a value system and not of a single value for a landscape. In fact, as has already been mentioned, there is not a single value, rather there are values situated at several levels of a society, and they may belong to different kinds of meaning. These values are qualitative and non-quantifiable.⁹⁰ These values may therefore be of several types, universal or not.

They may be universal values for the “harmony” of landscapes signifies for the people questioned about the meaning of the term:

- harmony between people, on the one hand, and
- harmony between people and nature, on the other hand,

which tally well with the principles of the Council of Europe, in so far as we find in these expressions some of the principles of sustainable development.

They may also be non-universal:

- belonging to national cultures which refer to major models structuring social representations of the landscape, such as pastoral, picturesque, and sublime models, and which have to do with aesthetic symbolism;
- belonging to local cultures where they may come in several dimensions:
- belonging to the culture which each individual fashions for himself through his personal trajectory and his own life, but which cannot be transposed and which is therefore difficult to use in a perspective of general interest,
- the dimension of collective memory in which are etched the events of the local society which are incorporated in landscapes (some would call these identity values),
- the dimension of knowledge and know-how about nature tested by the empirical experience of natural resources, but which are not necessarily the same for all inhabitants because of the diversity of uses; they may have a utilitarian, affective, or aesthetic significance (differing from academic aesthetics and specific to this particular place).

One of the primary problems to be solved is the one raised by the subtle dovetailing of these different scales of values, and which lies in the distinction between these different scales.

90. Some people use the notion of “landscape preferences” which only refers indirectly to the value system, and which presupposes the establishment of a hierarchy of landscapes drawn up by individuals.

The scale issue: national, local, European or world scale

Another problem associated with that above is the scale with which these values must be identified, because these values actually have a meaning on several scales – national, local, European or world scale:

- The national scale cannot be ignored, all the more so because it is perforce confronted by the mobility of people and the exchanges it imposes. The production of knowledge on this scale probably involves research, sociologists, geographers and anthropologists, and, needless to say, it is national institutions which are responsible for commissioning and financing their work.
- The local scale poses the problem of identification: who is qualified to understand these values and how can local people themselves contribute to the identification? Scientists must in fact be mobilised, but it is perhaps possible to envisage collaboration between them and local inhabitants. What should be the respective place of the different people involved at this scale: institutional people; technicians and field workers; scientists and inhabitants.

It is important to emphasise the significance of this issue, in so far as it involves a challenge between the production of new knowledge and the retrieval of common and popular knowledge by scientists who might be tempted to consider it as their own. If this common knowledge is used for active purposes, it is essential to say where it comes from so that local people may subsequently recognise themselves in the formulation of active measures, and not feel frustrated in terms of the relevance of their own knowledge.

- It is also important to add the European scale which obviously, first and foremost, concerns the implementation of the European Landscape Convention, and which is therefore both the European scale and the global scale: we are all aware today to what degree the evolution of the landscape depends on decisions taken at a European and/or international scale. It is thus crucial that the production of knowledge also occurs at these scales so that not only local people but also technicians, elected officials and scientists themselves will incorporate this dimension in their activities.

These many and varied methods, and the abundance of documentary sources and data, lead us to a first lesson: there is no question of there being a single method, or any method which is superior to any other. Each country, each authority, each institution, and each collective agency, group and non-governmental organisation responsible for the task of identifying and assessing landscapes or taking part therein, has a great deal of latitude for making their choices and implementing the method which they deem best suited to the case to be dealt with, drawing on the whole range of methods described here and elsewhere. This choice will depend on the scale, and the social, political and cultural contexts in which the operation will be undertaken. It seems necessary to adopt a holistic approach, but this does not diminish the complexity of the process by way of overly simplistic methods. The complexity must be taken into account and it is up to the people involved and the various specialists to try to understand it.

But once this choice has been made, and the methods have been applied and are producing their results, and once the values attributed to landscapes have been identified and made known, it is a matter of comparing them both with the knowledge coming from other fields acquired by the various scientific disciplines, and with the intentions put forward by technicians and politicians: so there is a shift here from knowledge to action, in other words, in the formulation of landscape quality objectives.

5.2.2. The formulation of landscape quality objectives

The shift from knowledge to action presupposes that any action, whether it be to do with protection, management or planning, is coherent with the values attributed by local people to landscapes, with the aim of foreseeing and anticipating the long-term future; but it must also encompass systems of economic and social logic at work, and the bio-physical functioning of the natural environment and the environment as modified by man. The formulation of landscape quality objectives is thus an essential task in the decision-making process, which must incorporate these various areas of knowledge – a task, it goes without saying, which is both complex and difficult. The institutional and political organisation of the different member states of the Council of Europe differs and does not permit the prescription of rules running counter to it.

The formulation of landscape quality objectives is faced with many different challenges focusing on the interaction of the different dimensions which has made it possible to update the distribution of data gathered during the identification and assessment phases into various fields of significance and activity.

– The first challenge concerns the question of development trends under way and the ability of societies to control them, and even shape them in order to steer them towards a desired objective. Any objective to do with a collective action is subject to the many different decisions taken by the individual people involved, because there is often a mistaken tendency to think that the landscape evolves as a result of major decisions and major projects decided upon by territorial authorities and major operators. But the landscape also and above all evolves as a result of a host of individual decisions. The fact is that in the great majority of cases, these are part and parcel of major development trends. Hence the importance of identifying them and taking informed decisions in order to formulate landscape action objectives better.

All objectives must be formulated in relation to these dynamics either by accompanying them with measures making it possible to guarantee a coherence between them and the previously identified landscape values, or by trying to steer them in a direction permitting such coherence.

– The second challenge involves the sharing of decisions among the persons concerned. All objectives must thus be part and parcel of the principle of social equity, which means acting in such a way that the planned landscape be defined

by those politically involved in such a way that this landscape, as planned for the future, corresponds to the vision that these different people have of it. But these decisions stem from the task of those who have been entrusted with making them, in other words, elected officials, who must act properly, in such a way that they take into account the aspirations of ordinary citizens.

– A third challenge concerns sustainable development. All landscape quality objectives must in effect guarantee the reproduction of the natural environment and its resources in the long term. They must therefore take into account the biophysical processes at work and be part of them, or attempt to steer them along a path guaranteeing this long-term reproduction of the environment and its resources.

Here, too, it is important to raise the question of the respective place of the persons involved, and in particular of scientists in relation to local inhabitants and of politicians in relation to scientists and inhabitants or fieldworkers and technicians. How are we to imagine that scientific knowledge which is more and more complex and often not easily accessible to those without university degrees is to be comprehensible to them? This is actually the ultimate and considerable challenge: the challenge of access by one and all to an understanding of the complex processes which modify the day-to-day landscape, whose problems do not lend themselves to simple answers. As we know, this is one of the hardest questions to be solved today, and the absence of any solution to it leads to tense situations which may even become dramatic. It is probably here that co-operation between the various people involved in a local situation is the most necessary factor, because the contribution of everyone, at their own level and in their own place, of what they know about the place concerned is probably the only way that will help to surmount this difficulty of understanding the complexity of landscape transformations and of solutions that can be proposed in such a way that the local authority accepts them.

Conclusion

This report represents a stage in the implementation of the European Landscape Convention, and does not claim to put forward definitive proposals which might be the culmination of the reflections of representatives of the member states and of the experts attending the various meetings organised by the Council of Europe. This stage will probably see new breakthroughs which will make it possible to apply the European Landscape Convention effectively.

The various methods which have been described above are neither exhaustive nor conclusive. The list will probably be further complemented and enhanced by other methods and techniques. However, some general proposals can be put forward.

– Identify their own needs and challenges within the context of the European Landscape Convention: member states should undertake, if they have not already done so, to carry out landscape identification and assessment operations on scales which are relevant to the features of the landscapes of the country concerned.

The method used for these operations cannot just be a single one, and may vary according to the various social, political and economic scales and context; it is nevertheless important that these operations be undertaken with active co-operation between the different people involved, be they elected representatives, scientists, technicians or local inhabitants.

- Favour quantitative and qualitative knowledge: these methods must not entail just quantifiable knowledge, they must also give equivalent consideration to knowledge about the value systems which are attributed to landscapes. These methods should make it possible to express the different areas of meaning of the landscape, whether they are part of the natural or man-made physical environment or whether they involve more abstract notions.

- Promote equality between the public and the expert: the production of knowledge does not mean just scientific production. It must also involve shared knowledge and know-how, and in these traditional and scientific knowledge must recognise each other's worth.

- Favour access to knowledge: access to knowledge produced by science, which is becoming more and more complex, must thus help towards an understanding shared not only by the scientific world, in other words by all disciplines, but also by less-informed local people. This means that a special effort must be made by both scientists and technicians to make this knowledge accessible to one and all.

- Promote co-operation on projects: where this knowledge is concerned, it is important that the scientific community of countries implementing the European Landscape Convention should undertake projects to update and shed light on the value systems attributed to landscapes by the societies concerned, at several levels.