

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Resolution 178 (2004)¹ on the contribution of local and regional authorities to the implementation of the European Landscape Convention

The Congress,

1. Recalling its Recommendation 40 (1998) on the draft European Landscape Convention, which presented the first draft of the Convention and which invited the Committee of Ministers to examine this draft with a view to adopting it as a Council of Europe convention;

2. Noting with satisfaction that:

a. in the course of 1999, the Committee of Ministers, with assistance from an intergovernmental expert committee, prepared the final draft European Landscape Convention based on the text proposed by the Congress;

b. on this basis, following the favourable opinion of the Steering Committee for Cultural Heritage and the Committee for the activities of the Council of Europe in the field of biological and landscape diversity, the Committee of Ministers adopted the European Landscape Convention (ETS No. 176) on 19 July 2000;

c. the Convention has been opened for signature on 20 October 2000, and to date it has been signed by 28 member states, of which 12 have also deposited the instruments of ratification with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe;

d. following its ratification by 10 member states, the Convention has entered into force on 1 March 2004;

3. Welcoming the fact that:

a. the European Landscape Convention refers to all the key principles contained in the first draft prepared by the Congress;

b. in accordance with the subsidiarity principle, the Convention pays special attention to the role of local and regional authorities in the protection, management and planning of the landscape;

4. Convinced that:

a. the entering into force of the European Landscape Convention will contribute to the democratisation of the landscape by bringing it closer to directly concerned local and regional communities;

b. the Convention opens up a new dimension for international public action to improve quality of life in the whole territory of Council of Europe member states;

5. Considering that with the entry into force of the Convention:

a. it is appropriate for local and regional authorities to assume the responsibilities entrusted to them by the Convention, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity and in conformity with the European Charter of Local Self-Government;

b. within the limits of their competences, local and regional authorities will be called upon to implement activities aimed at protecting, managing and/or planning the landscape, activities that will require substantial scientific and technical means;

c. the local and regional authorities concerned will have to exchange regular and systematic information and, if necessary, base their decisions on advice from competent organisations, universities and associations;

6. Wishing to assist local and regional authorities in the discharge of their responsibilities in conformity with the principles of the Convention;

7. Recalling the patronage that the Congress granted in February 2002 to the Observatory for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention in protected areas, established by the Italian authorities, in conjunction with the National Park of Cilento and Vallo di Diano (Italy);

8. Convinced that:

a. the initiative of the Observatory should be extended to cover the whole territory of the member states which have signed the European Landscape Convention;

b. in this respect, the establishment of a Europe-wide network of local and regional authorities interested in disseminating knowledge about and facilitating the implementation of the European Landscape Convention should be supported;

9. Stressing that such a network should:

a. constitute a structure of co-ordination, assistance and support made available to local and regional authorities so that they can discharge their institutional responsibilities in the field of landscape, in accordance with the principles laid down by the Convention;

b. contribute to improving the technical and scientific potential of local and regional authorities within the framework of their respective responsibilities, in particular in the areas of planning and licensing, in co-operation with the state authorities;

c. undertake, in particular, activities in the framework of preparing documents relating to the identification and evaluation of landscape elements, the setting of objectives for landscape quality and activities aiming at the protection, management and planning of the landscape;

d. represent a forum for dialogue and co-ordination of landscape policies for the local and regional authorities concerned;

e. implement actions complementary to the work of the committees of experts, responsible within the Council of Europe for monitoring the implementation of the Convention;

10. Calls on local and regional authorities of member states to launch a European network for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention, in line with the proposals outlined above.

1. Debated and adopted by the Congress on 27 May 2004, 3rd Sitting (see Document CG (11) 12, draft resolution presented by L. Becker (Hungary, L, EPP/CD), rapporteur).