



The European Landscape Convention

Florence, 20 October 2000

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Introduction

« The landscape ...

... has an important *public interest role in the cultural, ecological, environmental and social fields*, and constitutes a resource favourable to *economic activity* and whose protection, management and planning can contribute to job creation;

... contributes to the formation of local cultures and ... is a basic component of the European natural and cultural heritage, contributing to human well-being and consolidation of the *European identity*;

... is an important part of the quality of life for people everywhere: in urban areas and in the countryside, in degraded areas as well as in areas of high quality, in areas recognised as being of outstanding beauty as well as everyday areas;

... is a key element of individual and social well-being and ... its protection, management and planning entail *rights and responsibilities for everyone* ».

(Preamble to the European Landscape Convention, Florence, 20 October 2000)





The Council of Europe



1. 46 Member States (located in Strasbourg, France).
2. The Council of Europe is active in promoting democracy, human rights and the rule of law; and in seeking common solutions to the main problems facing European society today.
3. The Organisation is active in promoting sustainable development in line with the Recommendation Rec(2002)1 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to Member States on the Guiding Principles for sustainable spatial development of the European continent, previously adopted by the European Conference of Ministers responsible for regional planning (CEMAT).

The aims of the Guiding Principles are :

- to bring the economic and social requirements to be met by the territory into harmony with its ecological and cultural functions
- to contribute to long-term, large-scale and balanced spatial development
- to protect Europeans' quality of life and well-being taking into account landscape, cultural and natural values.





Origins of the Convention

- Initial draft prepared by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.
- Decision in 1999 of the Committee of Ministers to set up a select group of experts at governmental level responsible for drafting a European Landscape Convention.
- Adoption of the final text of the Convention by the Committee of Ministers on 19 July 2000.
- The Convention was opened for signature in Florence, Italy, on 20 October 2000 in the context of the Council of Europe Campaign “Europe, a common heritage”.
- The Convention came into force on 1 March 2004.





Why a Landscape Convention ?

The developments in agriculture, forestry, industrial and mineral production techniques, together with the practices followed in town and country planning, transport, networks, tourism and recreation, and at a more general level, changes in the world economy, have in many cases accelerated the *transformation* of landscapes.

The Convention expresses a concern to achieve *sustainable development* based on a *balanced and harmonious relationship* between social needs, economic activity and the environment.

It aims to respond to the public's wish to enjoy *high quality landscapes*.





Structure of the Convention

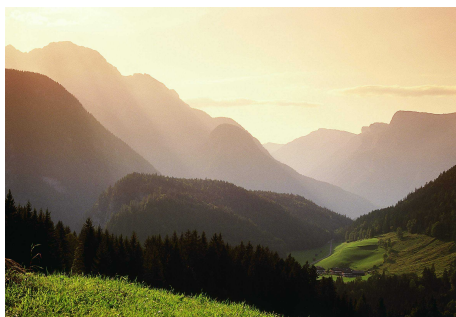
The text of the Convention comprises a preamble and four main sections:

- Chapter I, setting out the objectives and scope of the Convention, plus key definitions;
- Chapter II, stating the measures to be taken at national level;
- Chapter III, stating the basis for European co-operation, the measures to be taken at international level and the role of the committees responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Convention;
- Chapter IV, dealing with procedures for adopting the Convention and related matters.





I. Presentation of the Convention





Aims of the Convention

1. To promote protection, management and planning of landscapes;
2. To organise European co-operation on landscape issues.

The Preamble says that States wish to provide “a *new instrument* devoted exclusively to the protection, management and planning of all landscapes in Europe”.





The Preamble outlines the issues underlying the convention, emphasising the following points:



- Landscape is an essential consideration in striking a balance between preserving the natural and cultural heritage as a reflection of European identity and diversity.
- The public is encouraged to take an active part in landscape management and planning, and to feel it has responsibility for what happens to the landscape.





Relationship with other instruments

The Convention states in its preamble that it has regard to the legal texts existing at international level in the field notably:

- ✦ the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern, 19 September 1979),
- ✦ the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada, 3 October 1985),
- ✦ the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (revised) (Valletta, 16 January 1992),
- ✦ the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (Madrid, 21 May 1980) and its additional protocols,
- ✦ the European Charter of Local Self-government (Strasbourg, 15 October 1985),
- ✦ the Convention on Biological Diversity (Rio, 5 June 1992),
- ✦ the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Paris, 16 November 1972),
- ✦ and the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice on Environmental Matters (Aarhus, 25 June 1998).





Scope of the Convention

1. Substantive

It applies to the entire territory of the Parties and covers natural, urban and peri-urban areas, whether on land, water or sea.

It concerns not just remarkable landscapes but also ordinary or everyday landscapes and degraded areas.

Landscape is recognised irrespective of its perceived value, since all forms of landscape are crucial to the quality of the citizens' environment and deserve to be considered in landscape policies.





2. *Geographical*

The Convention is open for signature by the member states of the CoE.
The Committee of Ministers may invite the EU or any European state which is not a member of the CoE to accede.

3. *Territorial*

It is well understood that it would be against the object and purpose of the Convention for any Party to exclude parts of its main territory from the Convention's scope.

4. *Temporal*

The Convention has the benefit of applying indefinitely.
Amendments can adapt or improve a convention.





II. Content of the Convention

Definitions



Terms used in the Convention are defined to ensure that they are interpreted in the same way: landscape, landscape policy, landscape quality objective, landscape protection, management and planning.





1. **“Landscape”** means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.
2. **“Landscape policy”** means an expression by the competent public authorities of general principles, strategies and guidelines that permit the taking of specific measures aimed at the protection, management and planning of landscapes.
3. **“Landscape quality objective”** means, for a specific landscape, the formulation by the competent public authorities of the aspirations of the public with regard to the landscape features of their surroundings.
4. **“Landscape protection”** means action to conserve and maintain the significant or characteristic features of a landscape, justified by its heritage value derived from its natural configuration and/or from human activity.
5. **“Landscape management”** means action, from a perspective of sustainable development, to ensure the regular upkeep of a landscape, so as to guide and harmonise changes which are brought about by social, economic and environmental processes.
6. **“Landscape planning”** means strong forward-looking action to enhance, restore or create landscapes.





National measures



The Contracting Parties

undertake to implement four general measures on a national level:

1. legal recognition of landscape as constituting an essential component of people's surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity;
2. establishment and implementation of landscape policies aimed at landscape protection, management and planning;
3. establishment of procedures for the participation of the general public, local and regional authorities and other parties with an interest in the definition and implementation of the landscape policies;
4. integration of landscape into regional and town planning policies and in cultural, environmental, agricultural, social and economic policies, as well as in any other policies, with possible direct or indirect impact on landscape.





The Contracting Parties undertake to implement five specific measures on a national level, to be applied consecutively:

1. **Awareness-raising** : increasing awareness among the civil society, private organisations and public authorities of the value of landscapes, their role and changes to them;
2. **Promotion in training and education of** :
 - > training for specialists in landscape appraisal and landscape operations;
 - > multidisciplinary training programmes in landscape policy, protection, management and planning, for professionals in the private and public sector and for associations concerned;
 - > school and university courses which, in the relevant subject areas, address the values that the landscape has and the issues raised by its protection, management and planning;
3. **Identification and evaluation** : mobilising those concerned in order to reach a better knowledge of landscape, guiding the work of landscape identification and evaluation through exchanges of experience and methodology between the Parties at a European level;
4. **Setting landscape quality objectives** : defining landscape quality objectives for the landscapes identified and assessed, after public consultation;
5. **Implementation of landscape policies** : introducing policy instruments aimed at protecting, managing and/or planning the landscape.





International measures: European co-operation



1. International policies and programmes

The Parties undertake to co-operate in the consideration of the landscape dimension in international policies and programmes, and to recommend, where relevant, the inclusion of landscape considerations in them.

The Parties undertake to co-operate in order to enhance the effectiveness of measures taken under other articles of the Convention, and in particular :

- to render each other technical and scientific assistance in landscape matters through the pooling and exchange of experience, and the results of research projects;
- to promote the exchange of landscape specialists for training and information purposes;
- to exchange information on all matters covered by the provisions of the Convention.

2. Transfrontier landscapes

Transfrontier landscapes are covered by a specific provision : the Parties shall encourage transfrontier co-operation on local and regional level and, wherever necessary, prepare and implement joint landscape programmes.





Council of Europe Landscape Award

The Convention intends to give a “Landscape Award of the Council of Europe”.

The Landscape Award will recognise a policy implemented or measures taken by local and regional authorities or non-governmental organisations to protect, manage and/or plan their landscape which have proved effective in the long-term and can thus serve as an example to other territorial authorities in Europe.

The Award thus contributes to the stimulation of those working on a local level and to the encouragement and recognition of exemplary landscape management. It will be conferred by the Committee of Ministers, on proposals from the Committee of Experts responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Convention.





Institutional Apparatus

Provisions of the Convention

The Council of Europe acts as secretariat for the Convention and has structures in which all the Parties to the Convention may be represented.

Existing committees of experts set up under the Council of Europe statute will be tasked with monitoring the implementation of the convention.

The Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe should be involved in the work of these committees relating to the Convention.





Implementation of the insitutional apparatus

Given the many aspects of the concept of landscape and landscape-related activities, it was decided in July 2000 that the monitoring of the application of the Convention would be entrusted to the Committee for the activities of the Council of Europe in the field of biological and landscape diversity (CO-DBP) and the Cultural Heritage Committee (CDPAT)

The Declaration of the Second Conference of Contracting and Signatory States of the European Landscape Convention, adopted in 2002, requested the Committee of Ministers to involve the Committee of Senior Officials of the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning (CEMAT).







III. Implementation of the Convention

1. *Conferences of the Contracting and Signatory States to the Convention (2001 and 2002) and the Conference held on the occasion of the entry into force of the Convention (2004)*

The three Council of Europe bodies – the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe – were represented, as were the following international governmental organisations:

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO),
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP),
The Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP),
The International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), and
The Benelux Economic Union.

The main international non-governmental organisations specialising or interested in landscape were also represented.





2. *Activities conducted*

The purpose of the activities is to:

- raise awareness of what landscape is and its importance for each individual and society as a whole;
- increase the number of signatures and ratifications of the Convention;
- monitor its implementation by those states which have ratified it, while inviting other states to join in the efforts;
- support the exercise of good governance based on horizontal vertical and transversal co-operation; and
- promote European co-operation.





Workshops on the implementation of the European Landscape Convention

Organised on a regular basis since 2002, the meetings of the Workshops for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention take a detailed look at the implementation of various aspects of the Convention. Special emphasis is given to the experiences of the state hosting the meeting.

Workshops 2002

23-24 May, Strasbourg, France

- Landscape policies: the contribution to the well-being of European citizens and to sustainable development – social, economic, cultural and ecological approaches (Preamble of the Convention);
- Landscape identification, evaluation and quality objectives, using cultural and natural resources (article 6 of the Convention);
- Awareness-raising, training and education (article 6 of the Convention);
- Innovative tools for the protection, management and planning of landscape (article 5 of the Convention);
- Landscape Award (article 11 of the Convention).





Workshops 2003

27-28 November, Strasbourg, France

- Integration of landscapes in international policies and programmes (article 7 of the Convention) and transfrontier landscapes (article 9 of the Convention);
- Individual and social well-being (preamble of the Convention);
- Spatial planning and landscape (article 5, d of the Convention).

During the Workshops, an exhibition on *“Landscape through the eyes of the children of Armenia”* was organised.





Workshops 2005

16-17 June, Cork, Ireland

“Landscape for urban, suburban and peri-urban areas”

- to underline the importance of landscape policy in towns focusing on suburban and peri-urban areas;
- to exchange experiences, examining both good and bad practices in the protection, management and planning of the European landscape.

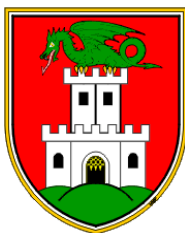




Workshops 2006

27-28 November, Strasbourg, France

- 11-12 May, Ljubljana, Slovenia, on “Landscape and society”;



- 28-29 September, Girona, Spain, on “Landscape quality objectives: from theory to practice”.





National information Seminars on the European Landscape Convention

- Information Seminar co-organised by the Council of Europe and the Republic of Armenia, Yerevan (Armenia), 23-24 October 2003
- Information Seminar organised by the Council of Europe, Moscow (Russia), 26-27 April 2004
- Information Seminar concerning sustainable spatial development and the European Landscape Convention co-organised by the Council of Europe and Romania, Tulcea (Romania), 6-7 May 2004
- Information Seminar co-organised by the Council of Europe and the Republic of Albania, Tirana (Albania), 15-16 December 2005



Another Seminar is to be held in Cyprus in 2007





Summary descriptive notes on the landscape policies pursued in Council of Europe member states

A document containing key facts concerning the landscape policies of the various Council of Europe member states. It facilitates the examination of the policies currently being pursued in this area across Europe.

The notes are designed to be updated on a regular basis, and cover:

- signature/ratification/approval of the Convention;
- name and contact details of the correspondent;
- definition of the term “landscape” in each national language;
- legal organisation (legal definition of the term “landscape”; constitutional or legislative status, regional laws),
- administrative organisation (ministry responsible for landscape, responsibilities, documents, representation at the level of regional and local authorities, specific programmes, education syllabi, communication, awareness-raising or information programmes aimed at the public).





The Naturopa Magazine

Three issues have been devoted landscape and the European Landscape Convention:

- "Landscapes: the setting for our future lives", *Naturopa*, n° 86-1998;
- "The European Landscape Convention", *Naturopa*, n° 98, 2002;
- "Landscape through Literature" *Naturopa*, n° 103, 2005



The latest issue brings together texts and pictures from the 46 Council of Europe member states to show that landscape has always had a key spiritual part to play in the lives of individuals everywhere .

<http://www.coe.int/naturopa>





The European Landscape Convention website:

<http://www.coe.int/EuropeanLandscapeConvention>

<http://www.coe.int/Conventioneuropeennedupaysage>

- Presentation of the European Landscape Convention;
- State of signatures and ratifications of the European Landscape Convention;
- Implementation of the European Landscape Convention – Meetings of the Workshops for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention;
- National Seminars on the European Landscape Convention;
- Reference texts on landscape;
- National policies;
- Network of partners of the European Landscape Convention;
- Landscape calendar;
- Publications;
- Contacts.





Conclusions

A thoroughly modern concept, landscape combines all four elements of sustainable development: natural, cultural, social and economic. It is also a constantly evolving story.

A unique setting and meeting place for populations, landscape is a key factor in the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of individuals and societies. A source of inspiration, it takes us on a journey, both individual and collective, through time, space and imagination.

Any government wishing to implement the principles of good governance needs to give due emphasis to landscape in its national and international policies.

