

# APPLICATION OF THE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION IN THE TERRITORIAL AND LANDSCAPE PLANNING IN SLOVAKIA

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The European Landscape Convention (ELC) as the first international treaty predominantly focused on all landscape types has been adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 19 July 2000. Later that year on 20 October in Florence this modern type of an agreement was opened for the signature of CoE Member States with an aim to achieve a common European attitude towards landscape protection, management, and planning. The international and the trans-frontier co-operation whether on local or regional levels could benefit from having the joint landscape programmes. After reaching a number of the required signatures the convention came into force on 1 March 2004. As to May 2014 there are 38 Parties to the convention, 2 Member States of the Council of Europe have not ratified it yet, while 7 other states still hesitate with their accession. The ELC sets a significant attention on how important is to identify and assess landscapes through field research done by the professionals who work in conjunction with the participation of the local inhabitants. In this respect as one of the novelty the convention has introduced a new term – the landscape quality objective.

The guidelines for the implementation of the ELC are there to advice on the implementation to the Member States (Recommendation CM/Res(2008)3). A local or regional authority, or a group of such authorities or a non-governmental organisation that has instituted a policy or measures to protect, manage and/or develop their landscape, which have serve as an example to other territorial authorities in Europe can be acknowledge by Council of Europe Landscape Award (the Resolution CM/Res(2008)3a).

The Slovak Government decided to sign the ELC in the year of 2005 (Decree No. 201 of 16 March 2005) and after the ratification process the ELC came into force on 1 December 2005. The implementation process have been realised according to the National Programme of ELC in Slovakia (Ministry of Environment, 2006) at several level – such as the institutional support, the international cooperation, informational campaign, awareness raising, promotion of landscape values, as well as the expert support towards elaboration of landscape typology, identification of landscape character objectives, typology of urban sites and the target landscape quality objectives in selected segments.

Landscape development planning has a long tradition in Slovakia when the original act from the year of 1976 (Building Code no. 50/1976) has been amended several times. The amendment from 2000 has created more space for the environmental terms, for landscape-ecological solutions as well as the use of the Landscape Ecological Plan.

The definition of landscape in the Building Code is as a complex system of the space, location, geo-relief, geological and pedological foundation, water, soil, fauna, flora, artificial objects and elements of the land-use, as well as the social-economic phenomenon and its relation. Even though such definition is quite detailed it is still not in line with the definition of landscape in the ELC concerning the democratic access to landscape. According to the ELC «landscape» is defined as «an area as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factor» (Council of Europe, 2000). This landscape concept implies recognition of the rights and responsibilities of the local communities to play an active role in planning and decision-making processes. In the meantime, a new Building Code of Slovakia is under a preparation. Its challenge would be to implement the requirements of the ELC into the land-use (territorial) planning.

The article brings an analysis of the accession process of Slovakia to the ELC and an overview of the current situation in the ELC implementation of the requirements into the legislation, strategic documents and planning processes at the national, regional and local levels. The main focus is the descriptions to which extend the ELC has contributed newly and originally to the protection, management and planning of the landscape in Slovakia. A special attention is given to its progress into territorial and landscape planning.

The final results are based on the deep analysis of existing and newly prepared legislative acts and strategic documents in the area of protection, management and planning of landscape. Also selected results of questionnaire surveys dealing with the effectiveness of the Slovakia situation in protection, sustainable coordination and wise planning of landscape at an occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ELC (October, 2010) has been used based on four groups of independent respondents feedback: a) NGOs; b) representatives of cities and towns; c) teachers and researchers from universities and scientific institutions, and d) university students.

The international monitoring process of the ELC which is just about to be set is also described.

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