



Implementing the European Landscape Convention in the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region:

Guidelines and recommendations



Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	3
II.	A sustainable ecosystem, a multifunctional landscape	8
III.	Fostering landscape initiatives through territorial awareness-raising	14
IV.	An innovative scale for new funding opportunities.....	14
V.	A working landscape, a valued asset.....	15
1.	Protecting a landscape, promoting a brand.....	16
2.	The attractive landscape as a destination.....	17
VI.	Conclusion	18
1.	Summary of the recommendations	19
2.	Assessment questionnaire for the implementation of landscape project	20

I. Introduction

On the 20 October 2000, the European Landscape Convention (ETS No. 176) is adopted in Florence by the Council of Europe (COE)

It is now ratified by the majority of the COE members and stands as an essential document for any policymaker or stakeholders that have to tackle with this topic.

The ELC actions are driven by the “changes in the world economy [that] are in many cases accelerating the transformation of landscapes”¹ and are aimed to promote the idea that “the quality and diversity of European landscapes constitute a common resource, and that it is important to co-operate towards its protection, management and planning”².

The explanatory report of the Convention provides that “the general purpose of the Convention was to encourage public authorities to adopt policies and measures at local, regional, national and international level for protecting, managing and planning landscapes throughout Europe so as to maintain and improve landscape quality and bring the public, institutions and local and regional authorities to recognise the value and importance of landscape and to take part in related public decisions”³

In a very interesting article the sociologist Monica Sassatelli informs us about the Convention “behind- the- scenes” and help us to better understand the shift of paradigm in landscape policy that the convention implied.

She writes that before the ELC “emerging European landscape policies are scarcely formalized and involve a wide typology of actors. Landscape cross-cuts sectorial policies (in such traditional sectors as agriculture, environment, culture, planning and tourism), “Landscape policies” can range from framework land-use planning to the conservation of biodiversity, aesthetic and historical landscape features, to so-called landscape character assessments, to initiatives as wide ranging as new training and university courses or as small scale as the promotion of landscape paths or tree-planting events”⁴.

The definition of the ELC does not really solve this indefinite character since: “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”⁵.

She continues her analysis: “like many other European documents the ELC itself is the result of contrasting forces: if the initial impetus was of a defensive type (“against

¹ Preamble of the European Landscape Convention

² Idem

³ European Landscape Convention, Explanatory Report, art 25

⁴ Monica Sassatelli, *European Identity between Flows and Places: Insights from Emerging European Landscape Policies*. *Sociology*, 44(1), 2010, p 69

⁵ European Landscape Convention, art 1-b

globalization” as a destroyer of the specificity of places), tendencies to define only landscape as the object of mere conservation have been resisted, and landscape is defined so as to include transformation rather than to condemn it. Definitions are always left sufficiently open-ended to allow for further adjustments to Europe’s many contexts and agencies”⁶.

If the definition of the landscape policy is an issue, we can imagine that the definition of the landscape itself is as controversial as it is meaningful for our purpose.

The ELC has made the choice of a wide definition mainly directed towards what is commonly named cultural landscapes. Indeed the ELC’s definition is very close to the one given to the cultural landscape in the art 47 of the World Heritage Convention of the UNESCO: “Cultural landscapes are cultural properties and represent the combined works of nature and of man. They are illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal”.

The influence of this definition will be decisive regarding the question of the scope and the goals of the ELC since they are determined by the definition of its object.

Art 1 of the ELC defines “Landscape” as an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.

The Convention is therefore extremely clear, the landscape is made of an interaction between the nature and man, this interaction cannot be blocked or stopped, as we will see, it has to be enhanced and managed since preservation cannot be a synonym for petrification.

Moreover the Convention “applies to the entire territory and covers natural, rural, urban and peri-urban areas. It includes land, inland water and marine areas. It concerns landscapes that may be considered outstanding as well as everyday and degraded landscapes⁷”.

The Convention proposes instruments that have the goal to integrate landscape in multi-level and cross-sectorial policies. Indeed the question of implementation draws multiple lines of division between European countries at a national and regional level, in such way that it is difficult to have an overall visibility of all the policy issues that the convention tackle.

In other words, while the convention insists on the inclusion of landscapes in sectorial policies, it is in fact the daily reality in most European country. The crucial difference is the lack of awareness of stakeholders about landscapes and its potentialities and of its close relation to the population well being.

The aim of the Convention is to raise that awareness, to give landscape a concrete and methodological basis so every sectorial policies can be interrelated and conscious about its stakes, especially the one regarding the well-being of the population and the importance of the surroundings of the landscapes.

⁶ Monica Sassatelli, op.cit. p 70

⁷ European Landscape Convention, Art 2

Evidently the ELC is not a European treaty or a European directive, it is a genuine example of one of the *soft regulations* that can be formalized by the Council of Europe. Therefore “Each state decides on its own institutional organisation in landscape matters according to its own overall institutional organisation (centralised, decentralised, federal) at the existing government levels (from national to local levels) and according to its own administrative and cultural traditions and existing structures⁸”.

In order to continue awareness-raising and to provide an alternative to the traditional way of recognition of outstanding cultural or natural heritage, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe institutes on 20 February 2008, the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe (COE). It follows the Article 11 that provides that “the Committee of Ministers shall define and publish the criteria for conferring the award, adopt the relevant rules and grant the award”.

This award is symbolic of the COE ‘stance towards the building of a united and coherent European policy towards landscapes and to the decision to not follow the path of institutions like the UNESCO.

Indeed the UNESCO is well known for listing material or immaterial heritage which is not meant to be the spirit of the Convention. The ELC is here to spark a dynamic, to take into account changes, modification in landscapes that are meant to be a long-term interaction between people and their environment.

A list, the sole perspective of a heritage, would be against this political stance. It is the reason why an award is deeply symbolic of the wish to reward initiatives, involvements of all stakeholders in the protection, the management and the promotion of landscapes.

The committee of Ministers specifies that “the award’s purpose is to reward exemplary practical initiatives for the achievement of landscape quality objectives on the territories of parties to the Convention.⁹”

The COE is therefore convinced that the award is intended to heighten civil society’s awareness of the value of landscapes, of their role and of the opportunities they can create.

Therefore the rules and framework governing the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe are certainly a very good indicator of what European stakeholders have in mind when they tackle this very broad issue.

Indeed “the award is an honorary distinction which acknowledges a policy or measures implemented by local or regional authorities or their groupings, or particularly remarkable contributions by non-governmental organisations, for sustainable protection, management

⁸ Recommendation CM/Rec (2008)3 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the guidelines for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention ((Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 6 February 2008 at the 17th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies). In fact the Convention already stated in its Art 4 “Each Party shall implement this convention, in particular Articles 5 and 6, according to its own division of powers, in conformity with its constitutional principles and administrative arrangements, and respecting the principle of subsidiarity, taking into account the European Charter of Local Self-government. Without derogating from the provisions of this convention, each Party shall harmonize the implementation of this Convention with its own policies.”

⁹ Resolution CM/Res(2008)3, On the rules governing the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 February 2008 at the 1018th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies)



and/or planning of landscapes. The award rewards a process of implementation of the Convention at national or transnational levels resulting in an effective, measurable achievement. The award also helps to make people more aware of the importance of landscapes for human development, consolidation of the European identity and the well being of individuals and society as a whole. It fosters public participation in the decision-making process concerning landscape policies”¹⁰.

The cross-border area would therefore be eligible since trans-frontier local or regional authorities and groupings of local and regional authorities concerned may be candidates, provided that they jointly manage the landscape in question¹¹. Furthermore a cross-border initiative will be well received by the COE since it would demonstrate a common awareness raising, a common understanding of the territorial peculiarity of the landscape above any *classic* territorial boundaries.

The landscape has no objective borders if we follow the ELC definition, it is a representation that is built by the population through its relation with its environment. We will develop further the idea that the landscape scale is in fact one of the most interesting ways to foster a cross-border policy making dynamic that would be territorially and politically flexible and adapted to local needs.

The most important features are indeed the criteria for conferring the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe that will provide very useful guidelines in the shaping of our recommendations for the cross-border area.

These four criteria imply all the major and current thematic in landscape development and the singular perspective of the COE, reminding us that landscapes are not at all a static and easy concept but rather a controversial one where guidelines from an authority as the COE is very useful in order to avoid forgetting or neglecting one of the many dimensions and resources of landscapes.

¹⁰ Appendix to Resolution CM/Res(2008)3, Rules governing the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe, art 1

¹¹ European Landscape Convention, Art 9 -Transfrontier landscapes: The Parties shall encourage transfrontier co-operation on local and regional level and, wherever necessary, prepare and implement joint landscape programmes

1. Sustainable territorial development

The completed projects submitted must give tangible form to the protection, management and/or planning of landscapes. This means that the projects must have been completed and open to the public at least three years, when the candidatures were submitted. They must also:

- be part of a sustainable development policy and be in harmony with the territorial organisation of the area concerned;
- demonstrate their environmental, social, economic, cultural and aesthetic sustainability;
- counter or remedy any damage to landscape structures;
- help enhance and enrich the landscape and develop new qualities.

2. Exemplary value

The implementation of the policy or measures that have helped to improve the protection, management and/or planning of the landscapes concerned must set an example of good practice for others to follow.

3. Public participation

The policy or measures implemented with a view to the protection, management and/or planning of the landscapes concerned should involve the active participation of the public, local and regional authorities and other players and should clearly reflect the landscape quality objectives. The public should be able to participate simultaneously in two ways:

- Through dialogue and exchanges between members of society (public meetings, debates, procedures for participation and consultation in the field, for example);
- Through procedures for public participation and involvement in landscape policies implemented by national, regional or local authorities.

4. Awareness-raising

Article 6.A of the Convention provides that “each Party undertakes to increase awareness among civil society, private organisations and public authorities of the value of landscapes, their role and changes to them”. Action along these lines taken, as part of the completed project concerned will be assessed.¹²

These four criteria enhance the idea that the landscape is “a mainstream political concern, since it plays an important role in the well-being of Europeans who are no longer prepared to tolerate the alteration of their surroundings by technical and economic

¹² Appendix to the rules, Criteria for conferring the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe

developments in which they have had no say. Landscape is the concern of all and lends itself to democratic treatment, particularly at local and regional level”¹³.

The landscapes have therefore political and social implications that only multi-level participation of private and public stakeholders can answer.

Several elements are stressed in these criteria:

- The need for preservation of the landscape
- The recognition of different landscape’s functions beyond the ecological and aesthetic common view
- The necessity to include landscapes in wider cross-sectorial policies
- The value of networking and good practices
- The idea that only governance practices can be capable of assessing the change of policy scale induced by landscapes
- The participation of citizens that goes along with a pro-active promotion of these initiatives, this award being one of its developments

This prospective study of recommendations for the cross-border landscapes will therefore follow the thread of these main components of a successful landscape project in order to understand exactly the consequences of this new understanding and new imperatives linked to landscapes.

We hope that this analysis and these recommendations will be the framework for implementing policies or measures in the cross-border area and that in the mid-term cross-border’s landscapes will be eligible for and winner of this competition.

II. A sustainable ecosystem, a multifunctional landscape

As we approached it in our introduction, defining a landscape is truly not an easy task, since it is seen as an amalgam of natural, economic and cultural aspects.

Basically, a landscape can be defined, as an ecosystem that is interacting with man and that is located at the crossroads of nature and culture. This interaction is mostly beneficial to the population since as an ecosystem, landscapes can provides goods and services in various ways.

It can be food or energy but also a recreational service which can all lead to its subjective valorisation (financial, emotional, aesthetical or recreational) which is important in the measurement of a population demand for a landscape in particular or for some of its features

This encounter between the objective features of a landscape, its nature, and its subjective features, grasped in the mind and in the needs and practices of men, shows us its ambivalence.

¹³ European Landscape Convention, Explanatory Report, art 23

Traditionally analysed through a regulatory, geographical, artistic or even strategic, perspective, the ELC definition, this new landscape paradigm, opens the door to almost philosophical enquiries about our relation with nature, about the way it unveils to us a new relation that is no more dialectical, where we are the subject and nature the object, but rather intersubjective where we are both subjects, where nature is not reified but where we help nature in its development and vice-versa.

The paradigm of modernity put the human being at the centre of the world, this anthropocentric view is the core of a will to master nature, to frame (to *Gestell*) it as an assets, a property that can be used and abused, whereas we should remind to refrain this excess, to "*uti, non abuti*", to use and to not abuse¹⁴.

Sustainable developments, growing environmental concerns, new regulations prove that the time of the abuse is now gone. The ELC is the example of an initiative that underlines the importance of this equal relation whilst, in a smart approach, avoid to be too directive, to forget that many landscapes are not the results of designed plans, of a ruling authority but rather of traditional farming practices, of the fulfilment of its every day needs by a local population and that this spatial relation has an existence and a temporality of its own.

To that extent, it is very difficult to use a traditional, administrative, top-down approach towards landscapes because some are originally free from any political planning while another part of them were built on a political agenda or for industrial purpose.

The meaning of this gap is based on the difference commonly made between a monofunctional and a multifunctional landscape.

A cross-border example can help us to illustrate this difference, in South-West Oltenia, in the county of Mehedinti, they are two communes whose landscapes are mainly related to coal extraction being then coal-mining landscapes.

Before the industrialization and the concomitant need of coal for the steel industry and the production of electricity, these lands were devoted to agriculture.

The coal mining introduced a monofunctional use of the landscape, disregarding of any other considerations that the extraction of the precious lignite. The result is the loss of groundwater, landslides and important social issues, firstly this landscape is an unfriendly and even marked environment, like any other industrial landscapes where horizons are veiled by decayed chimney and remnants of their smokes.

The interaction between the human and its environment is broken because nature is used and abused, seen only as a resource to exploit till exhaustion.

This example shows that monofunctionality goes with an outdated view of environment designed in a time of unplanned necessity when the most fashionable term in use was not sustainable development but short-term profitability.

The multifunctionality is richer because it understands the landscape as a "land of opportunities"; it promotes the multiplicity of interactions between the population and the landscapes.

¹⁴ Martin Heidegger, "*Die Frage nach der Technik*" in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, Pfullingen, G. Neske, 1954,

Of course agriculture is the centre of this landscape “praxis” which, in the case of the cross-border area, cannot be seen as an issue but rather as quite fortunate.

De Groot et al. define landscape functions, as “the capacity of natural processes and components to provide goods and services that satisfy human needs, directly or indirectly”. **This means that landscape functions “[...] can be seen as the actual (“functional”) processes and components in ecosystems and landscapes that provide the goods and services that have direct or indirect, benefit to human welfare¹⁵.”**

The EPSON” project LIVELAND, which aimed at enhancing the liveability of landscapes, chose to use mainly the term function in its analysis of landscapes. According to its researches there would be a general agreement on three categories/ functions, namely production, regulation and cultural functions.¹⁶

It is quite surprising that the LIVELAND project chose only three types of functions since most of the models available comprise 4 functions.

Indeed the common typology includes four categories: (1) provisioning functions; (2) regulation functions; (3) habitat functions; and (4) cultural and amenity functions (Groot et al.¹⁷):

a) Provisioning functions

They comprise functions that supply “physical services” in terms of resources or space. This category has been divided into two classes, production and carrier functions:

i. **Production functions** reflect resources produced by natural ecosystems, for example the harvesting of fish from the ocean.

ii. **Carrier functions** reflect the goods and services that are provided through human manipulation of the natural productivity (e.g. fish from aquaculture). In these cases, the function from nature is the provision of suitable substrate or space for human activities, including agriculture, mining, transportation, etc.

b) Regulation functions

They result from the capacity of ecosystems and landscapes to influence (“regulate”) climate, hydrological and biochemical cycles, earth surface processes, and a variety of biological processes. These services often have an important spatial (connectivity) aspect; e.g. the flood control service of an upper watershed forest is only relevant in the flood zone downstream of the forest.

¹⁵ Groot, J.C.J., Rossing, W.A.H., Jellema, A., Stobbelaar, D.J., Renting, H. and Van Ittersum, M.K. (2007), “Exploring multi-scale trade-offs between nature conservation, agricultural profits and landscape quality – A methodology to support discussions on land-use perspectives”, *Agriculture, Ecosystems & Environment*, 120(1): 58–69, [DOI].

¹⁶ http://www.espon.eu/main/Menu_Projects/Menu_TargetedAnalyses/liveland.html

¹⁷ de Groot et al 2002. *A typology for the classification, description and valuation of ecosystem functions, goods and services*. *Ecological economics* 41 (393-408)

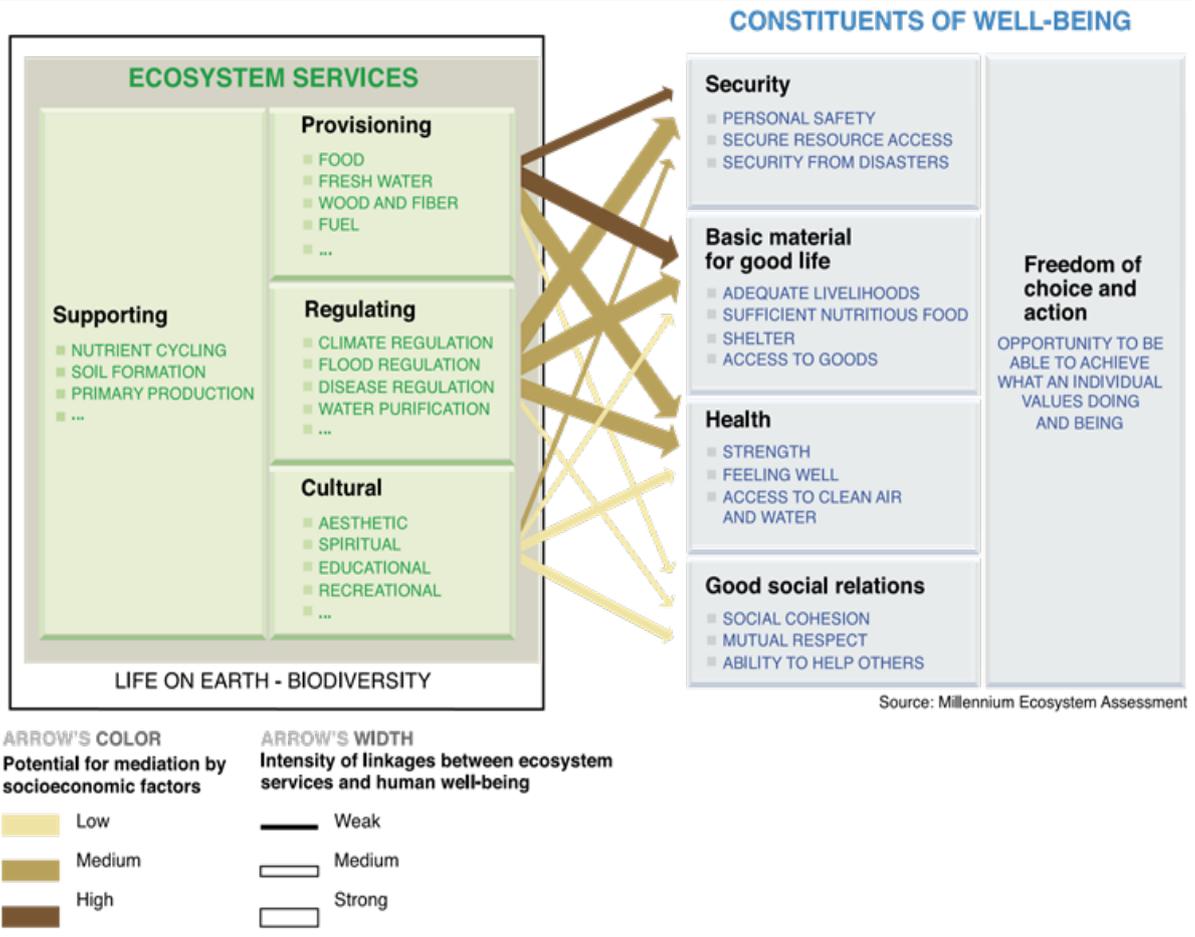
c) Habitat functions

They comprise the importance of ecosystems and landscapes to maintain natural processes and biodiversity, including the refuge and the nursery functions. The refuge function reflects the value that landscape units have to provide habitat to (threatened) fauna and flora, the nursery function indicates that some landscape units provide a particularly suitable location for reproduction and thereby have a regulating impact on the maintenance of populations elsewhere.

d) Cultural and amenity functions

They relate to the benefits people obtain from landscapes through recreation, cognitive development, relaxation and spiritual reflection. This may involve actual visits to the area, indirectly enjoying the area (e.g. through nature movies), or gaining satisfaction from the knowledge that a landscape contains important biodiversity or cultural monuments.

This model has been slightly changed by **the *Millennium Ecosystem Assessment*** which outlines provisioning, regulating, cultural and supporting services in relation to the constituents of well-being closely to the logic of the ELC as it underlines the interaction between people and a delimited territory that provides positive outcomes and enhance the overall well-being of the population.



The support provided by ecosystems services to human well-being. Source: Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005.

The idea of a landscape that would provide ecosystem services contributing to general well-being is very well exemplified by agriculture where the single introduction of a beneficial insect that protects crops against parasites can create a true virtuous circle.

Indeed if the farmer does not use insecticide, he will not pollute groundwater and will produce organic products that will have an added value. Moreover the return to a more traditional farming practice will enhance the aesthetic attractiveness of the landscape.

From this example we see that multifunctionality is meant to be an endogenous process that benefits to everyone.

Nevertheless several issues have to be tackle to achieve this idea of a self-sufficient landscape because indeed this quite autarkic image may seem a bit unrealistic.

The CAP shows us that the inclusion of environment concerns in farming practices is often linked to financial incentives¹⁸. This approach can be hazardous since it is very difficult

¹⁸ Consortium Detente Consultants Srl / Atelier Foaie Verde Srl, Audit of the Current Situation (Valuing landscape of the border Romania-Bulgaria), p26-29



to assess the economic contribution of a farmer to the preservation of a landscape and that ideally the incentive should be the profit of sustainable farming.

This difficulty is correlated to factors as complex as the market of agricultural products where small-scale initiatives have absolutely no impact.

The other problem can be the lack of a long-term vision in favour of short-term projects with limited funding. The idea being to show as fast as possible how the money is spent even if the results will not last long.

This is the reason why the ELC underlines the sustainability of a landscape project especially as a fundamental criterion for applying to the award. The authorities stated that “the applied project has to be part of a sustainable development policy and be in harmony with the territorial organisation of the area concerned; to demonstrate their environmental, social, economic, cultural and aesthetic sustainability; to counter or remedy any damage to landscape structures; to help enhance and enrich the landscape and develop new qualities”¹⁹.

These necessities show us one of the main difficulties for the authority in charge of the definition of a landscape strategy; it must manage a very important number of factors.

Landscape which seems at first sight a spatial delimitation within a territory with specific features, is now a sort of territorial Gordian knot with so many intricate threads as people, economy, culture, aesthetics, participatory democracy, private and public stakeholders that it seems impossible to really grasp the concrete actions that can be undertaken in order to fulfil the commitment to the Convention or even more to understand fully the value of the ELC and its instruments.

However an active implementation of the Convention can be a key leverage at a cross-border scale, since the region shares some similarities with landscapes as it is formal and as it is an interaction between natural elements (the Danube, the Black Sea, localisation in their countries, in Europe) and people (identity, common lags and priorities for development and relation with their capitals and the rest of their national territory)

Therefore landscapes can be a key for a sustainable territorial development of the region at the condition that the ELC framework is well implemented or at least that these new territorial entities gain some visibility in order to be eligible for European programmes or any other funding.

In the scope of the ELC, these funds would not be oriented solely towards landscape development; they would mainly be a response to a variety of issues belonging to the domain of environment, agriculture or culture. The landscape is a place where all these questions spatially merge, it can be compared to a catchment area of all the developmental needs of the cross-border region.

In order to value that diversity and these opportunities, landscapes have to be understood by their functions, by their relation with their environment. This view has to

¹⁹ Appendix to the rules, Criteria for conferring the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe

balance the limited aesthetic or monofunctional definition of the landscape in order to assert it as an eco-system in itself providing goods and services.

III. Fostering landscape initiatives through territorial awareness-raising

We will stress first and foremost the need to lighten any administrative or regulatory burden regarding landscape policy. The voluntary implementation that we advocate is the assertion that the spirit of the ELC is that solutions will come from a partnership between the populations, the farmers, the SME's, the public authorities...

All these stakeholders have to be informed about the work already done by the authorities and the identification of numerous landscapes in the area, therefore the first initiative is to communicate, to spread the news that what most people knew as an area or a territory is now considered as a landscape, to implement awareness-raising measures towards the area covered by a landscape to inform about the meaning of landscape and its possible outcomes

- ➔ **A landscape caravan could travel around the area in order to present the programme and the opportunities that it offers.**
- ➔ **Local authorities, NGOs and LAGs (local group of actions) should be given information and material to organize public meetings**

Without these first initiatives it would be very difficult to implement any policy even though some could suggest that exemplary landscapes could be chosen for the first policies, reducing the cost of this widespread communication.

At the contrary, this initiative is the best way to get in touch with the population, for instance through the assessment of a survey or the organization of local meetings, it will be easier to decide which local stakeholders are the most motivated by the project or need it the most.

The goal is of these recommendations cannot be only to find areas to implement projects with existing funds. It is to find areas where a dynamic can be sparked, areas that represent the cross-border cross-sectorial lags, needs and opportunities and that will find benefits in the landscape scale.

IV. An innovative scale for new funding opportunities

Indeed we have seen that landscapes are a variety of things but we have not yet emphasized that landscape governance introduced a new scale for public policies. As a matter of fact in an area like the cross-border region, in places like the twin cities (cities facing each other on the Danube banks), landscapes can be the ideal way to create a territorial entity with a proper policy and management.

Landscapes permit to draw territorial limits in a more efficient way and for this reason to be more eligible for EU funding through some of the Commission new instruments.

These new instruments as Community-Led-Local-Development follows the principle of subsidiarity as it focuses on specific sub-regional territories where local action groups composed of representatives of local public and private socio-economic interests carry out area-based local development strategies designed to take into consideration local needs and potentials²⁰.

On this model, the building of network with public and private stakeholders at a landscape scale for related purposes can permit the upbringing of such horizontal initiatives and the fostering of evolved and agile public authorities.

For instance, the Commission underlined funding priorities regarding Romania and Bulgaria that meet some of the landscape policy aims notably the protection of natural resources or the need of a greener economy²¹.

→ **The CLLD is a perfect instrument to attract these funds since it is designed by a local action group that we can name *a landscape action group* that will focus on one specific matter as biodiversity protection or heritage preservation.**

The conceptual advantage of the landscape is to give people a *panoramic* view of the effects of their actions. The landscape strategy at the scale of the cross-border region has to be simple, easy to understand and to implement because it can give short-term benefits that are unknown to the population.

If the landscape can be seen as a system, the landscape strategy is more of a circle, a virtuous circle where one single initiative sparks other initiatives that enhances each other.

→ **The role of the authority is to give knowledge, awareness and to help people define their needs, design their projects, apply for funding and finally implement structures fitted for their local development.**

Landscape is an opportunity to promote the sharing of common interests, identities and perspectives. Moreover it opens various fields of implementation, agriculture is a priority in a rural area but the recreational and cultural value of landscapes is as much important.

V. A working landscape, a valued asset

“Working landscapes” is a broad term that expresses the goal of fostering landscapes where production of market goods and ecosystem services is mutually reinforcing. “It means working with people as partners to create landscapes and ecosystems that benefit humanity and the planet²²”.

For instance farmers educated to this idea will take specific, measurable steps to improve the environmental impact of their commodity crop production. This idea is now

²⁰ http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/themes/clld/en/clld_en.cfm

²¹ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/index_en.cfm

²² <http://ourenvironment.berkeley.edu/research/research-themes/working-landscapes/>

widely spread in the USA where it exists a working landscape certificate with specific criteria for better farming practices²³.

➔ **Some of the production criteria that could be promoted through a good practices label include:**

- No use of genetically modified (GM) crops, thereby protecting biodiversity.
- No continuous annual crop production on the same acreage, thereby protecting soil.
- Soil testing on contracted acres and fertilization according to test results and state agronomic recommendations to assure that nutrients are used efficiently and are not likely to be leached from the soil.
- No use of chemicals that are known human or animal carcinogens and no use of atrazine.
- Use of cover crops or assurance that at least 70 % of crop residues remain on the entire field to minimize soil erosion
- Creation of farm plan that includes information on biodiversity, energy use and greenhouse gas emissions to help identify and encourage improvements in sustainability areas not currently addressed

➔ **At a smaller scale an initiative could be fostered towards the preservation of beneficial insects, which will reduce the use for insecticide and therefore prevent soils and water contamination.**

It will also permit the production of organic products than can be sold under the name of the area. Farmers, NGO's, the population, the consumer will all benefit from one single initiative.

1. Protecting a landscape, promoting a brand

“Vermont is a state in the north-eastern United States of America where dairy farming is the primary source of agricultural income. In the last half of the 20th century, developers had plans to build condos and houses on what was relatively inexpensive, open land. Vermont's government responded with a series of laws controlling development and with some pioneering initiatives to prevent the loss of Vermont's dairy industry.

The dairy barn remains an iconic image of Vermont, but because of a 87 % decrease in active dairy farms between 1947 and 2003, the preservation of the dairy barns has increasingly become dependent upon a commitment to maintaining a legacy rather than basic need in the agricultural economy.

The Vermont Barn Census, organized by a collaboration of educational and non-profit state and local historic preservation programs, has developed educational and

²³ <http://www.sustainablebiomaterials.org/criteria.landscape.php>. The following criteria are part of this landscape certification programme

administrative systems for recording the number, condition, and features of barns throughout Vermont.

An important and growing part of Vermont's economy is now the manufacture and sale of artisan foods, fancy foods, and novelty items trading in part upon the Vermont "brand," which the state manages and defends. Examples of these specialty exports include Cabot Cheese, the Vermont Teddy Bear Company, Fine Paints of Europe, Vermont Butter and Cheese Company, several micro-breweries, ginseng growers, Burton Snowboards, Lake Champlain Chocolates, King Arthur Flour, and Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream"²⁴.

Vermont is a very good example of a way to build a brand that will sell very different products by capitalizing on a symbolic and historic image of an area. Even though dairy farms decline was very important, public and private stakeholders decided to preserve this asset, this distinctive feature of the cultural landscape in order to promote a brand for the whole state.

→ **Landscapes of the cross-border area should preserve iconic or symbolic products or craftsmanship traditions even if they are almost extinct.**

This past has a value since it can help to build a brand for a range of products that will benefit from this authenticity, from this historical ground. In the same order of idea, a specific work has to be done on preserving the traditional transhumance road of the shepherds

2. The attractive landscape as a destination

The development of tourism in the cross-border area is a transversal priority and here landscape is a way to promote a destination, to mobilize different stakeholders in order to make them understand that each of their actions can have effects on other services provided by the landscape.

For instance tourism can be highly linked to the inclusion of landscapes in program as the Natura 2000 network²⁵.

→ **Initiatives as a thorough study of habitats and species in cross-border landscaped could be the opportunity to promote them and foster their inclusion in the EU's Natura 2000 network.**

Farming is also very important since it can contribute to the recognition of the landscape as Natura 2000 and High Nature Value.

→ **Developing incentives and grants directed towards traditional farming practices could be a way to introduce ecosystem services and to promote the benefits of multifunctional landscapes**

²⁴ These specific paragraphs are mostly quotations taken from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vermont>.

²⁵ The underlining of the Natura 2000 network was proposed for instance by a Romanian applicant to the landscape award, the Fundatia Adept, <http://www.fundatia-adept.org/>, whose goal is "Conservarea biodiversității și dezvoltare comunitară în Transilvania"

Thus the traditional designing of a landscape have a touristic value since the main target of cross-border destination is eco-tourist. Thinking the landscape as an eco-system has great value towards these tourists.

If we advocated a regional awareness-raising campaign, it was also to create an outside understanding of some of the initiatives in the region and the capacity of the population to welcome tourist and educate them to the uniqueness and ecological features of the landscapes.

➔ **Awareness-raising goes along with educational and training programs and initiatives. It could be done through the inclusion of this concern in classes, through local events and through publications as leaflets**

This initiative is essential to gather local support for conservation and to foster understanding of its potential economic benefits.

VI. Conclusion

We have now a better understanding of the European Landscape Convention and of its scope and objectives.

A landscape has no definite border, it exists solely through the people interaction with a specific environment or area, and only the people through their awareness and commitment can really reveal a living landscape and value a working landscape.

The population's implication in landscape policies is mandatory in order to achieve all the phases of its design and implementation.

Thus landscapes are an opportunity to experiment new types of policy-making, close from multi-level governance, where every stakeholder can participate. This landscape governance has to be multi-sectorial because the landscape in itself has several functions. If only one function is privileged the balanced relation between nature and culture will be broken, the land will only be an object used and abused until no more of its resources will be left.

In a rather similar but more acceptable manner, if a landscape is frozen as if it was a painting hanged in a museum, this dynamic, the process of mutual benefits will be lowered in favour again of one single function, recreational or aesthetic.

Multifunctionality is the best way to avoid pitfalls such as exploitation or exhibition generated either by greed or goodwill. It gives room to an everyday relation between the people and their landscapes, it makes possible that the goods and services provided by a landscape are beneficial to the overall well being of its population.

Indeed when we are confronted to a virtuous circle where for instance a farmer produces organic fruits or dairy that are sold in local markets and that the quality of these products give a qualitative image to the area. We understand, in that case, that the more fully and diverse is the use of a land the more we can expect positive outcomes for our efforts.

When it comes to recommendations, to what people should do to implement in practices this quite ideal system of fair interaction with landscapes, the best answer is

the most simple, they should be aware of it, of the place they live in, of the stakes they can hold to benefit from it.

The European Landscape Convention is therefore an excellent framework because it highlights the urging need of awareness raising.

This specific measure that should take place in every landscape requires few expenses in the beginning in comparison with wide projects of rehabilitation and can bring back an important return on investment.

Eventually the funds needed to implement landscape policies are in various form available through EU instruments since environmental incentives for a sustainable agriculture or funding for the preservation of natural habitats are crucial in the EU agenda.

At the end the collaboration between a conscious and involved civil society and a committed and well-informed public authority on landscape projects would allow the cross-border area to capitalise on this new scale of governance for its future economic and human development.

1. Summary of the recommendations

1. A landscape caravan would travel around the area in order to present the programme and the opportunities that it offers
2. Local authorities should be given information and material to organize public meetings
3. Landscape scale projects for specific EU cohesion funds (community-lead-local-development),
4. Creation of landscape-based action groups at the basis of local initiatives in the framework of the LAGs, ADIs or CLLD
5. Farming production criteria that could be promoted through a good practices label
6. Small-scale initiatives towards the preservation of beneficial insects
7. Preservation of iconic or symbolic products or craftsmanship traditions even if they are almost extinct.
8. Creation of landscape brands to sell local products with environmental and cultural value
9. Thorough study of habitats and species in cross-border landscapes as an opportunity to foster their inclusion in the EU's Natura 2000 network.
10. Development of incentives and grants directed towards traditional farming practices.
11. Awareness-raising goes along with educational and training programs and initiatives. It could be done through the inclusion of this concern in classes, through local events and through publications as leaflets
12. Awareness-raising programmes about eco-tourism opportunities
13. Pro-active synergies building with other development policies in the cross-border area

2. Assessment questionnaire for the implementation of landscape project

- Is the project part of a sustainable development policy?
- Does it contribute to the enhancement of environmental, social, economic, cultural or aesthetic values of the landscape?
- Has it successfully countered or posed remedy to any pre-existing environmental damage or urban blight?
- Can the project be considered of exemplary value?
- Which are the good practices that it implemented?
- Does the project actively encourage the public's participation in the decision-making process?
- Is the project in line with the wider policies implemented by national, regional or local authorities?
- Is the project effectively increasing the public's awareness of the importance of landscape in terms of human development, consolidation of European identity, or individual and collective well-being²⁶?

²⁶ These questions are part from the application form to the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe