

SEE Heritage Network Meeting & Workshop
Cultural Landscapes and the Implementation of the European Landscape Convention in South East Europe – The Role of NGOs, Novi Sad/Belgrade, Serbia October 11-14, 2009.

APPEAL TO THE PUBLIC

The SEE Heritage Network held a conference in Novi Sad and Belgrade from October 11-14, 2009 on the topic of *Cultural Landscapes and the Implementation of the European Landscape Convention in South East Europe – The Role of NGOs*. In addition to Network members from the region, experts and representatives of institutions that are involved in the process of preserving and shaping cultural landscapes in Serbia also took part in the conference. The approach emphasized the importance of interdisciplinary work in treating this topic, as stressed in the Convention.

The European Landscape Convention was adopted by the Council of Europe in Florence in 2000 as the first international document which promotes a unique approach in landscape protection, management and planning. According to the Convention, landscape refers to an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. Landscape is tied to an important quality of life to the people who live in it.

Stemming from the fact that landscape is the basic ingredient of natural and cultural heritage, SEE Heritage Network members are unanimous in their opinion that implementing the European Landscape Convention will be crucial in maintaining the identity of the whole region. Due to recent transition processes, the landscape is in constant risk of uncontrolled urbanization, which has created a need to engage citizens and government on all levels. This engagement has as its primary goal to preserve the identity of the landscape and to improve the quality of life.

Proceeding from the fact that “landscape is the key element for individual and community wellbeing and that its protection, management and planning means everyone’s right and responsibility”, NGOs and associations like SEE Heritage Network believe that they could have a significant role in that process and that they can contribute to the successful implementation of the Convention, through educational activities. Many of the Network members are already active in this field and they are prepared to continue in the process of landscape protection, management and planning.

We appeal to all institutions and organisations, particularly those that are engaged in spatial planning and the preservation of natural and cultural heritage, to apply the European Landscape Convention as much as possible in protection, management and planning. We appeal especially to the decision makers and political structures in the South East region of Europe to sign and ratify the European Landscape Convention, and to begin its implementation. Regardless of whether or not the Convention is adopted, it is necessary to raise awareness about landscape values, roles and changes, as well as adequate protection, management and planning.

SEE Heritage Network

Novi Sad, October 13th, 2009.