Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Opinion 220 (2000)[1]

Draft European landscape convention

Parliamentary Assembly

1. European landscapes form the basis of our living environment, an indispensable element in every person's quality of life. They represent our common European heritage and are a vital but fragile asset that we must pass on to future generations.

2. In an evolving society where the development of natural resources and the cultural heritage, both being integral parts of European landscapes, are subject to constant pressure, there is a growing need to apply innovative methods so as to reconcile the often conflicting needs of our societies and to sustain landscape as an important resource.

3. As previously stated in Resolution 1150 (1998) and Recommendation 1393 (1998), the Assembly welcomes the draft European landscape convention, which aims to meet this challenge and congratulates the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) for taking the initiative.

4. This proposal provides a coherent, dynamic and flexible framework for co-operation at European level. It takes into account the diversity of European landscapes, the varied nature of values attached to the concept of landscape, as well as numerous traditions of management and use of land throughout Europe.

5. Today, the process of drafting the convention is in its final stages following the work by the select committee of experts, established by the Committee of Ministers for this purpose.

6. The Assembly welcomes the fact that the final proposal put forward by the expert group was subject to a general consensus.

7. Furthermore, it welcomes the strong support for the draft European landscape convention given by a number of delegations, such as the proposal by the Italian authorities to host a conference devoted to the opening for signature of the convention during the Italian presidency in autumn 2000.

8. However, it takes note of the concern voiced by some of the government delegations involved in the debate, and agrees with their proposal and the initial position of the Committee of Ministers, that the follow-up to the convention be entrusted to existing intergovernmental committees of the Council of Europe.

9. The Assembly agrees with the proposal of the German delegation to amend Article 14.2 and to increase to ten the minimum number of signatory parties necessary for the convention to enter into force.

10. In view of the aforementioned, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

10.1. adopt the draft European landscape convention as proposed by the select committee of experts with the exception of provisions regarding the European Landscape Committee, and thus replacing Articles 10, 11 and 12 with alternative Articles 10 and 11, as defined in the appendix, and amending Article 14.2 so as to increase to ten the minimum number of parties necessary for the convention to enter into force;

1. Assembly debate on 26 June 2000 (17th Sitting) (see Doc. 8732, report of the Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities, rapporteur: Mr Martínez Casañ). Text adopted by theAssembly on 26 June 2000 (17th Sitting).

10.2. invite member states to sign and ratify the convention after its adoption by the Committee of Ministers;

10.3. invite the European Union to adhere to the European landscape convention.

Appendix

Appendix

Taking into account the opinion expressed by a number of delegations of the above-mentioned committees – 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 (CC-PAT) – and as a result of the consultation with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE), your rapporteur proposes to replace Articles 10, 11 and 12 of the draft convention by the following new paragraphs:

Article 10 - Monitoring of the application of the convention

1. The competent committee of experts, set up by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in pursuance of Article 17 of the Statute of the Council of Europe, shall be responsible for monitoring the application of the convention.

2. Following each of the committee of experts' meetings, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe shall transmit a report on the work carried out and on the operation of the convention to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe.

3. Under its statutory powers, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe may forward an opinion to the Committee of Ministers on the aforementioned report.

4. The committee of experts shall propose to the Committee of Ministers, in consultation with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, the criteria for conferring and rules governing the European Landscape Award.

Article 11- European Landscape Award

1. The European Landscape Award is a distinction which may be conferred by the Council of Europe on local and regional authorities that have instituted, as part of the landscape policy of a party to this convention, a policy or measures to protect, manage and/or plan their landscape, which have proved lastingly effective and can thus serve as an example to other territorial authorities in Europe.

2. Applications for the European Landscape Award shall be submitted to the committee of experts by states. Transfrontier local and regional authorities and groupings of local and regional authorities may apply provided that they jointly manage the landscape in question.

3. On proposals from the committee of experts and bearing in mind the opinion of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, the Committee of Ministers shall define and publicise the criteria for conferring the European Landscape Award, adopt the relevant rules and confer the award.

4. The conferral of the European Landscape Award to local and regional authorities shall place them under an obligation to ensure the lasting protection, management and/or planning of the landscape areas concerned.