Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 1752 (2006)[1]

Conservation and use of the landscape potential of Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly reasserts the Council of Europe's ongoing commitment to a form of regional/spatial planning that enables the populations of all Council of Europe member states to have a better standard of living and to the principle of sustainable development.

2. It draws attention to the Council of Europe's legal instruments relevant to the protection and management of the natural and cultural environment and regional/spatial planning, in particular the European Cultural Convention (ETS No. 18), the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (ETS No. 104) and the European Landscape Convention (ETS No. 176), which came into force on 1 March 2004.

3. It also draws attention to Committee of Ministers Recommendation Rec(2002)1 to member states on the Guiding principles for Sustainable Spatial Development of the European Continent.

4. The Assembly is aware that present-day landscape management problems are connected with the concept of sustainable development and its implications for relations between human beings and their natural environment.

5. European landscapes have taken shape over the centuries under the growing influence of human activities and, over time, the impact of the economy on the general appearance and specific components of the landscape has become increasingly obvious. The principle of sustainable development is based on the idea that socioeconomic development and environmental problems are inextricably linked.

6. The Assembly sees the quality and diversity of the landscape as a pan-European asset that requires general measures such as the recognition of the concept of landscape in national law, the implementation of proper national, regional and local landscape policies and the participation of civil society and non-governmental organisations in schemes to preserve the potential of the landscape.

7. It also considers it essential to take specific measures to educate and raise the awareness of the population and society in general, in particular through school education.

8. It believes that the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (CEMAT) is the political body best placed to help co-ordinate the achievement of shared objectives and joint spatial development strategies throughout Europe, particularly when it comes to protecting landscapes.

9. The Assembly draws particular attention in this connection to the existing expertise of the regions in numerous member states in terms of spatial planning, and to the existence of cross-border areas with exceptional biological diversity.

10. Moreover, the Assembly stresses that Europe needs common standards of landscape classification in order to compare the various areas; standardise mappings; and devise landscape planning and management methods for assessing the impact of the economy on the environment and on landscapes.

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1. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 29 May 2006 (see Doc.10928, report of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs, rapporteur: Mr Valeriy Sudarenkov).

11. The Parliamentary Assembly therefore recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

11.1. ask the governments of member states to sign and/or ratify the European Landscape Convention if they have not already done so and, if necessary, ensure that it is transposed into existing legislation and implemented;

11.2. set up a Europe-wide programme to establish a "pan-European system of national socio-natural landscapes as a genuine mechanism for sustainable development";

11.3. set up a pan-European international landscape centre;

11.4. ask the governments of member states to use all the financial, scientific and technical resources at their disposal to preserve the cultural and natural landscape and integrate this in national and European sustainable development programmes;

11.5. ask member states to make due provision in their regional/spatial planning policies for landscape measures; prudent management of urban ecosystems; effective rural development schemes; the preservation of particularly vulnerable landscapes, especially in mountain and coastal regions and on islands; and the development of transfrontier co-operation;

11.6. instruct the European Conference of Ministers Responsible for Regional Planning, in conjunction with the Committee for the activities of the Council of Europe in the field of Biological and Landscape Diversity and the Steering Committee for Cultural Heritage to:

11.6.1. organise a pan-European landscape forum or hold an international landscape congress to enable member states to share their experiences in such areas as landscape legislation and give thought to a European landscape policy;

11.6.2. adopt an integrated pan-European system of landscape typology and classification;

11.6.3. prepare model framework legislation on the landscape for use by Council of Europe member states.