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CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD
CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Twenty-third session
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29 November – 4 December 1999

Information Document: Report of the Regional Thematic Expert Meeting on Cultural Landscapes in Eastern Europe, 29 September – 3 October 1999, Bialystok, Poland

Summary

Twenty-five experts from fourteen Eastern European States Parties to the Convention and representatives from the advisory bodies (ICOMOS, ICCROM and IUCN) attended this meeting which was organized by the World Heritage Centre and the Polish authorities. Case studies illustrating the diversity of the notion of cultural landscapes in Eastern Europe and current situation of these landscapes in a phase of social and economic transition were presented. The region displays different influences resulting in transboundary cultural landscapes. The rapid change is a challenge for the identification and integrated management of the landscape heritage of Eastern Europe.

The participants adopted recommendations concerning the specificity of cultural landscapes in the region and their management.

Action by the Committee: The Committee may wish to take note of the report and the recommendations contained in pages 7 to 9 of the document.

Report of the Regional Thematic Expert Meeting on Cultural Landscapes in Eastern Europe

Introduction

Following a decision by the twenty-second session of the World Heritage Committee (December 1998), a Regional Thematic Expert Meeting on Cultural Landscapes in Eastern Europe was organized by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in co-operation with The Centre for the Preservation of Historic Landscape (Warsaw) with financial support from the World Heritage Fund. The meeting was held in Bialystok, Poland, from 29 September to 3 October 1999. It was attended by 25 experts from 14 States Parties to the World Heritage Convention (Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia and Ukraine), a representative from the Polish National Commission for UNESCO, experts from the three Advisory Bodies (IUCN, ICOMOS, ICCROM), three representatives from The Centre for the Preservation of Historic Landscape and two representatives from the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. The list of participants and the agenda of the meeting are included as Annex I and II of this report.

Mr Michalowski (The Centre for the Preservation of Historic Landscape) welcomed the participants and highlighted the work which has been carried out on cultural landscapes in Eastern Europe. He also explained the choice for one of the field-visits (Augustowski Canal) as linking different parts of the country and as one of the major transportation routes in Europe. He expressed his gratitude to the participants for providing background papers and acknowledged the high level of attendance at the meeting.

Mr Zurowski (Deputy Minister of Culture and National Heritage Protection) explained that the 1990 Act for Cultural Heritage Protection also provides regulations for the protection of cultural landscapes. In Poland, awareness about the links between natural and cultural heritage is high and the Polish School of Conservation enjoys high international recognition.

Ms Lukaszuk (Voivod of Podlasie) thanked UNESCO for organising the meeting in her region and highlighted the significance of cultural and natural heritage protection, in particular traditions, customs and vernacular architecture, which have developed in synergy with nature.

Ms Rössler (UNESCO World Heritage Centre) in thanking the host country for the support in organizing the meeting drew the attention of the participants to the results of preparatory work at a number of expert meetings (e.g. „European Cultural Landscapes of Universal Value”, Vienna, Austria, 1996). She referred to the 1992 definitions of World Heritage cultural landscape categories and their links to the cultural heritage criteria for inscription on the World Heritage List. She pointed out that currently 11 cultural landscapes are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List and that an increasing number of nominations are received every year. She recalled that this expert meeting

offered a chance for identifying outstanding cultural landscapes from Eastern Europe and to make specific recommendations to States Parties, the World Heritage Committee and to UNESCO to implement this part of the Global Strategy for a representative and balanced World Heritage List.

Cultural landscape case studies from Eastern Europe

Ms Lootus (Estonia) presented a review of Estonian cultural landscapes emphasizing the natural and cultural diversity with long coastlines and numerous rivers and lakes. Estonian cultural landscape research has resulted in particular in archaeological studies on the history and development of settlements and 2000 years of land cultivation. No national inventory of cultural landscapes has been prepared so far.

Ms Redberga (Latvia) presented the case of the Abava-Valley which has been nominated as a cultural landscape for review by the World Heritage Committee in 2000. She emphasized that the site includes a protected territory of 8030 ha with characteristic buildings of the 19th and 20th century as well as protected natural features (caves, springs, etc.). The site displays an extraordinary biological (858 species) and cultural diversity and is one of the pilot projects of the Council of Europe.

Mr Bucas (Lithuania) explained the different periods of the organically developed agricultural landscape of Lithuania which – due to agricultural and rural reforms – resulted in unique types of landscapes. Landscapes of national, European and World Heritage value can be distinguished. The Curonin Spit is a living cultural landscape completely created by people (e.g. dune crest established against moving sands). The site, nominated for both its natural and cultural values in a transfrontier co-operation (Russian Federation – Lithuania), will be reviewed by the World Heritage Committee in 2000.

Ms Baseova (Czech Republic) illustrated the different categories of cultural landscapes with examples from her country. Lednice-Valtice (inscribed in the World Heritage List in 1996) was the first landscape zone protected by law in the Czech Republic and is a unique example of a designed landscape completely created by man. She made a plea to consider other types of sites – such as monuments, cities etc. – in their landscape context (e.g. Kromeriz, Telc).

Mr Möcsenyi (Hungary) questioned the notion of „cultural” in relation to landscape, as in his view all landscapes are cultural. He presented the case of the Hortobagy National Park which illustrates in an area 74 000 ha traditional landuse patterns as well as cultural lifestyles which are unique in Europe. At the same time the site has a unique avifauna, including waterfowl. Hortobagy National Park is a cultural remnant of all the ancient Puztas in the east and has been nominated as a cultural landscape for review by the World Heritage Committee in 1999.

Mr Bogdanowski (Poland) presented different methods, which are applied by spatial planning institutions in Poland; in particular a study on the delimitation and valorisation

of complexes of landscapes units (JARK). He illustrated this method with Ojcovian National Park, Kazimierski Landscape Park and the landscape of Slemien.

Mr Liptay (Slovakia) highlighted the fact that in his country so far all the World Heritage nominations have been presented in relation to their surrounding landscape: Banska Stiavnica with its water management system of the mining town, the terraced fields of the village of Vlkolinec; and Spissky and the monumental landscape of Spissky Hrad. He stressed the need for clarifying the links between the European Landscape Convention and the World Heritage Convention.

Mr Cheishivili (Georgia) presented the case study of Upper Svaneti, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1996 mainly for its vernacular architecture. In fact, the site, located between the snow-covered peaks of the Caucasus mountain range, displays a unique form of landuse of 142 villages in 19 communities. The interdependency of these communities with their natural environment is evident and can be seen in frontier-passes, routes and high-altitude vegetable gardens. Mural paintings represent local traditions and the surroundings of the mountainous landscape.

Mr Vedenin (Russian Federation) stressed the rich diversity of Russia's traditional and agricultural landscapes extending from cultural landscape of indigenous peoples in the north to historic landscapes (royal palaces and gardens and landscapes associated with important military or historic events and industrial areas). Different elements of landscapes can be identified which are important for the present culture including haystacks, fences, chapels, etc. He highlighted the examples of Leo Tolstoy's estate, the Solovetsky Islands and questioned whether the importance of Gulag-camps should be recognised.

Mr Czerkies (Ukraine) presented the diversity of cultures in the Krim-Peninsula which was at the crossroad between east and west (nomadic cultures, Jewish fortresses). The historic importance of the Conference of Jalta at the Castle and Garden of Bachtschi-Saraj makes it a designed landscape with associative values. The impacts of the catastrophe of Tchernobyl on the region of Polacs can not be underestimated as 160 000 people have been moved out of 76 villages. The landscape is now a monument of a technological catastrophe with 800 places containing radioactive waste.

Ms Bratuleanu (Romania) emphasised that the different categories of cultural landscapes can be „mixed” because of the complexity and diversity within a region. Eastern Europe is a territory of transition and connects east and west; it is a space of influences, trade routes, cultural contacts and corridors. This is particularly the case for Romania, a country at the crossroads of empires. The cases of The Gardens and the Gurghiu Castle (Transylvania), Tara Hategului (Southern Carpathians), The Cells in the Caves from the Buzau Montains, The Monasteries of the Vrancea Hills, Rimetea Village and the Port Town of Sulina at the Danube display this diversity of human interaction with the natural environment.

Mr Shtylla (Albania) explained that the old Roman pathway united west and east and links as „Via Egnatia” Lake Ohrid (on the World Heritage List as a mixed site) with Thessaloniki. He commented that such an important historical route deserves international recognition and requires its preservation before its disappearance. It would also provide an opportunity as cultural tourism itinerary, a concept promoted by the Council of Europe.

Ms Stoianova (Bulgaria) presented the case-study of the Rozen Landscape (Town of Melnik and Rozen Monastery) which is a cultural historic territory on the south-west slope of the Pirin Mountains. The Melnik pyramids are rock formations shaped by river erosion.

Ms Mavar (Croatia) presented the three main landscape units of Croatia: the littoral-Mediterranean area with 718 islands, the hilly-continental area and the pannonean-continental area. A new law came into force in May 1999 which specifically includes cultural landscapes. She presented a number of potential World Heritage sites, including the Lonja Field, the Istrian Peninsula, the Starigradsko Field and the Brijuni Islands which all represent different landscape features due to their geomorphological, cultural and landuse diversity.

Mr. Bartman (Poland) presented an overview on natural and cultural features of agrarian landscapes. He raised positive (e.g. human beliefs) and negative aspects (e.g. pollution) which shape the landscape and effect its values. The discussion focussed on customs and traditions through which landscape features are protected (sacred trees).

Presentations by the Advisory Bodies

Mr de Jong (ICOMOS) highlighted the diversity of Eastern Europe and the need for integrated conservation and management of sites. ICOMOS encounters problems with evaluating cultural landscapes, in particular the lack of comparisons of different sites in the regions, the lack of management plans and legal protection. The World Heritage Global Strategy provides a mechanism for a thematic approach to cultural landscape assessment.

Mr Szilassy (IUCN) explained the differences between the IUCN protected area categories (category V: protected landscape) and the World Heritage landscape categories. IUCN collaborates with ICOMOS in the evaluation of cultural landscapes and acknowledge sustainable landuse practices, biological diversity and spiritual relationships with the natural environment. IUCN has developed „Guidelines for the assessment of natural qualities of cultural landscapes”. He mentioned Hortobagy National Park (Hungary) which represents a unique example of man-nature interactions.

Ms Lisitzin (ICCROM) presented the integrated territorial and urban conservation training course of ICCROM. Sustainability has to be seen from a cultural heritage perspective and conservation strategies have to be developed. Landscape protection has also to be seen in the context of regional planning to accommodate transition and socio-

economic change. She highlighted the interactions between users and professionals and the importance of local communities.

Field Visit

A field trip was organized to the Augustowski Canal north of Bialstok. This waterway, built between 1824 and 1839, links Poland with Belarus. The trip included a reception by the Mayor of Augustow (who expressed his wish for a possible inscription of this technical monument in the World Heritage List), a visit to the Canal Museum and a boat trip. The Polish part of the Canal, which was recognised as a “monument of technology” in 1968, will be maintained regularly and can be visited by tourists. The Belarusian part, however, requires urgent restoration work. Visits to the Park and Palace at Choroszcz and to the city of Pultusk followed, where participants discussed in particular restoration projects.

Working Groups

The expert group decided to discuss a number of issues in three different working groups:

- a) identification, definition and values of cultural landscapes;
- b) legal aspects, management and protection of cultural landscapes; and
- c) development, rapid change and survival of cultural landscapes.

The recommendations of the experts are presented below.

Closing session

Mr Michalowski, The Centre for the Preservation of Historic Landscape, thanked UNESCO for the support for the meeting and the participants for their contributions. He announced that The Centre for the Preservation of Historic Landscape will publish the proceedings of the expert meeting in the year 2000.

The representative of the Centre thanked Mr. Michalowski, his team, and the Polish authorities, for the excellent organization of the expert meeting and all the experts from the countries in the region, as well as the Advisory Bodies, for their participation and contribution to the success of the meeting. She highlighted the meeting as one step in the process towards a balanced and representative World Heritage List.

Recommendations of the expert group

Cultural landscapes in Eastern Europe embrace a diversity of interactions between people and their environment and comprise a diverse and complex heritage with natural and cultural values. Eastern Europe is a territory of transition and connects east and west. The region is a space of different influences, trade routes and cultural corridors. It displays a diverse natural environment from the Baltic Sea to the Mediterranean, from the snow-covered mountains of the Caucasus to the arctic north. Both the natural environment, covering several biographical regions, and the rich cultural history, traditions and ways of life produce unique cultural landscapes. These landscapes are difficult to assess, to manage, to preserve and to develop.

Having reviewed case studies from 14 countries and discussed general issues in three working groups, the expert meeting recommends:

1. Identification, definitions and values of cultural landscapes

Issues: The working group pointed out that different notions and definitions of “landscape” and “cultural landscape” exist and that a specific interpretation depends on regional and national contexts. The group noted that the term “cultural landscape” as defined in paragraph 39 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention should be used flexibly and as a technical term. Some group members preferred the term “landscape heritage”. The group also noted problems with the interpretation and application of the term “outstanding universal value”. The group furthermore noted the definition of “landscape” as presented in the European Landscape Convention and its links with the World Heritage Convention.

Recommendations

- The group highlights the rapidly disappearing landscape heritage of Eastern Europe and urges States Parties, UNESCO and the World Heritage Committee to assist in its protection, conservation and maintenance. The group notes that cultural landscapes from Eastern Europe are underrepresented on the World Heritage List and urges States Parties to review their inventories and tentative lists in this regard. States Parties are encouraged to enhance recognition and protection of this type of heritage. It is recommended to States Parties to review old inventories in the field of cultural landscapes and to encourage them to prepare new detailed inventories. Following this step, tentative lists for the World Heritage List could be revised to include different categories of cultural landscapes.
- The group pointed out that numerous World Heritage nominations have been prepared by Western European States Parties and that their experiences could assist States Parties in Eastern Europe in the identification, preservation, conservation, maintenance, development/rehabilitation of cultural landscapes.
- The group noted the transboundary character of cultural landscapes and recommended that States Parties consider identifying and nominating transfrontier

- landscape sites (e.g. Curonian Spit). This would imply increased co-operation in a regional network and it is recommended that UNESCO and the Council of Europe support these efforts.
- The group notes the “test of authenticity” and the “conditions of integrity” as defined in the Operational Guidelines and questioned whether “authenticity” could be at all applied for cultural landscapes. The issue of the continuous evolution of cultural landscapes was underlined.
 - The group recommended a close co-operation between the Council of Europe and its European Landscape Convention and UNESCO and its World Heritage Convention.
 - A number of case studies raised the issue of “landscapes of memory”, which are linked to historic events, such as Gulag camps, or the “landscape of the Tchernobyl disaster”. How could these important issues be recognized in a World Heritage context and be commemorated?

2. Legal aspects, management and development of cultural landscapes

Issues: The experts noted that there are many different legal provisions and with a few exceptions, no specific laws for the protection of cultural landscapes have been developed. Furthermore, problems of socio-economic transition, land privatization and complex political processes were highlighted. Competence overlaps between different ministries and agencies is seen as characteristic. The experts stressed that protection and development should be co-ordinated and underlined the importance of the commitment of the local communities.

Recommendations

- The experts recommended that the States Parties prepare specific interministerial framework law or complete existing laws.
- The group noted that a project is under way for the “Preparation of Management Guidelines for Cultural Landscapes” and recommends that the recommendations below should be taken into account by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and the advisory bodies.
- It is recommended to States Parties to extend the existing system of designation and management of protected areas to cultural landscapes with the guidance and assistance of UNESCO (case studies should be prepared by the States Parties concerned).
- The group stressed the importance of the involvement of local people and the respect for the needs and rights of local communities. Planning and development of the landscape area should include their participation. Special attention should be given to the awareness building and education of local people.
- In development processes the potential of the cultural landscape should be strengthened by identifying and supporting specific qualities and characteristics of the region. It should be kept in mind that landscape management requires a vital local and regional economy.

- The experts highlighted the importance of seeking integration between different development activities (tourism etc.) in order to obtain a balance with the values of the cultural landscape.
- The experts recommended that co-operation be established between responsible local, regional, national and international bodies and development actors; integration should be sought linking planning, financial and monitoring activities. This should be activated by the States Parties in implementing the World Heritage Convention.

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ANNEX II

**Programme of the Regional Thematic Expert Meeting
on Cultural Landscape in Eastern Europe**

Wednesday, 29 September 1999

- Arrival of the participants
- 10:00-12:30 - Visit at the Centre for the Preservation of Historic Landscape
- 13:00-14:00 - Lunch
- 14:30-17:00 - Transfer for Bialystok by bus
- 17:00-18:00 - Checking-in at the „Golebiewski” Hotel
- 18:00-20:00 - Official opening of the UNESCO Meeting:
 - Mr. Dr. Andrzej MICHALOWSKI
Director of the Centre for the Preservation of Historic Landscape
 - Welcoming speeches:
 - Ms. Krystyna LUKASZUK
Voivod of Podlasie
 - Mr. Stanislaw ZUROWSKI
Deputy Minister of Culture and National Heritage Protection
 - Ms. Dr. Mechtild RÖSSLER
UNESCO World Heritage Centre
“World Heritage Cultural Landscapes”
 - Session I: ‘*Landscape of Eastern Europe*’ (Chair: Dr. Robert de Jong)
 - Ms. Kersti LOOTUS /Estonia
- 20:00 - Dinner

Thursday, 30 September 1999

- 9:00-11:00 - Session I: '*Landscapes of Eastern Europe*' continued (Chair: Dr. Robert de Jong) - experts addresses:
- Ms. Zanda REDBERGA, Latvia
 - Mr. Prof. Jurgis BUCAS, Lithuania
- 10:00 - Coffee break
- 10:15 - Continued - experts addresses:
- Session II: '*Landscapes of Eastern Europe*' (Chair: Ms. Katrin Lisitzin) – expert addresses:
- Ms. Olga BASEOVA, Czech Republic
 - Mr. Prof. Mihály MÖCSENYI, Hungary
 - Mr. Prof. Dr. Janusz BOGDANOWSKI, Poland
 - Mr. Jaroslav LIPTAY, Slovakia
 - Mr. Guram CHEISHIVILI, Georgia
 - Mr. Yuri VEDENIN, Russia
 - Mr. Prof. Bohdan CZERKIES, Ukraine
- 13:00-15:00 - Lunch
- 15:00-16:30 - Session III: '*Landscapes of Eastern Europe*' (Chair: Dr. Peter Strasser) – expert addresses:
- Ms. Anca BRATULEANU, Romania
 - Mr. Prof. Dr. Valter SHTYLLA, Albania
- 16:15 - Coffee break
- 16:30 - Continued - experts addresses:
- Ms. Ivanna STOIANOVA, Bulgaria
 - Ms. Zofia MAVAR, Croatia
- addresses of the Representatives of the Advisory Bodies:
- Mr. Dr. Robert de Jong, ICOMOS
 - Mr. Dr. Zoltan SZILASSY, IUCN
 - Ms. Katrin LISITZIN, ICCROM

- 19:00 - Proceedings start: discussion on the criteria for nomination to the World Heritage List of three landscape categories - conditions of the region of Eastern Europe
- 20:00 - Dinner

Friday, 1 October 1999

- 8:30-9:30 - Transfer for Augustów by bus
- 9:30-10:30 - Introduction to the history of the Augustowski Canal
- 10:30-13:00 - Study trip - presentation of the Augustowski Canal and its surrounding landscapes
- 13:00-14:00 - Lunch
- 14:00-15:00 - Return to Bialystok
- 16:00 - Session IV: *'Issues Related to, and Valuation of Agricultural Landscapes and the Associative Landscape of a Religious Kind'* (Chair - Dr. Zoltan Szilassy)
- Prof. Dr. Edward BARTMAN, Poland
'Natural and Cultural Features of an Agrarian Landscape'
- Session V: *'Discussion on the criteria for nomination to the World Heritage List of three landscape categories - conditions of the region of Eastern Europe'* (Chair - Dr. Mechtild Rössler, Dr. Robert de Jong)
- 20:00 - Dinner

Saturday, 2 October 1999

- 9:00-12:00 - Session VI: *'Proceedings and conclusion of the Conference proceedings: Discussion on the final document of the Meeting'*
(Chair - Dr. Andrzej Michalowski)
- 13:00-13:30 - Trip to Choroszcz
- 13:30-15:00 - Lunch at the Palace at Choroszcz
- 15:00-18:00 - Transfer for Pultusk and visiting the town
- 18:00-19:30 - Dinner at the Pultusk Castle
- about 21:00 - Departure for Warsaw

Sunday, 3 October 1999

- 10:00 - Visit of the Old Town and Royal Castle in Warsaw for participants who are leaving Warsaw in the afternoon
- Departure of the conference participants