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WHC-96/CONF.202/INF.10
Paris, 30 April 1996
Original: English/French

**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION**

**CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE
WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**

BUREAU OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Twentieth session
UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, Room X (Fontenoy)

24 - 29 June 1996

Information Document: Report of the Expert Meeting on European Cultural Landscapes of Outstanding Universal Value

Vienna, Austria, 21 April 1996

Introduction



The expert meeting on "European Cultural Landscapes of Outstanding Universal Value" was organized by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in cooperation with the Austrian National Commission for UNESCO and with support from the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education and Cultural Affairs. The meeting was attended by 42 experts from 14 States Parties to the World Heritage Convention (Austria, Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom) and experts from the following organizations: the Council of Europe (working group on the European Landscape Convention), the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the International Association of Landscape Ecology (IALE), the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA), Europa Nostra, Austria Nostra and the International Alpine Protection Commission/Commission Internationale pour la Protection des Alpes (CIPRA).

Mr Franz Neuwirth, in welcoming the participants on behalf of the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education and Cultural Affairs, gave explanations on the choice of the extraordinary venue in which the meeting was held, the Semper Depot. The Depot, dating from the middle of the last century, was originally used for the production and storage of theatrical and operatic sets. The renovation and modern use of the Depot constitutes one of the successful examples of architectural revitalization in Vienna.

Mr Harald Gardos, Secretary General of the Austrian National Commission for UNESCO welcomed the participants and explained Austria's contribution to the implementation of the World Heritage Convention and in particular, that several nominations of Austrian properties have been submitted for inclusion on the World Heritage List.

The representative from the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in thanking the host country for their generous support for the meeting, drew the attention of the participants to the papers which had been prepared by a number of experts. In this context she referred to the "Reader for the Expert Meeting European Cultural Landscapes of Outstanding Universal Value" provided by the Secretariat to all participants at the expert meeting (see Annex III of this report). She recalled that this meeting

is another step in the process of identifying and selecting outstanding cultural landscapes of universal importance in view of their possible inclusion on the World Heritage List.

The first expert meeting on World Heritage cultural landscapes held in La Petite Pierre (France) in 1992 drafted the categories for cultural landscapes of outstanding universal value. These categories were adopted by the sixteenth session of the World Heritage Committee in 1992 and included in the Operational Guidelines. "Cultural landscapes represent the "combined works of nature and of man" designated in Article 1 of the Convention. They are illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the *[2] physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal... The term "cultural landscape" embraces a diversity of manifestations of the interaction between humankind and its natural environment" (Paragraphs 36 to 37 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention).

The recommendations of the cultural landscapes Action Plan for a regional and thematic approach to the inclusion of cultural landscapes on the World Heritage List were made by an expert meeting held at Schorfheide/Templin (Germany) in 1993. This Action Plan was adopted by the seventeenth session of the World Heritage Committee in December 1993. A regional and thematic approach for cultural landscapes was implemented with a series of expert meetings on "Heritage Canals" (Canada, September 1994), "Routes as Part of Our Cultural Heritage" (Spain, November 1994), "Asian Rice Culture and its Terraced Landscapes" (Philippines, March/April 1995) and the "Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop on Associative Cultural Landscapes" (Australia, April 1995). The Action Plan and the reports of these expert meetings can be found in the book "Cultural Landscapes of Universal Value. Components of a Global Strategy" (edited by B. von Droste, H. Plachter and M. Rössler, Jena, Fischer Verlag 1995).

This expert meeting can build on an increased insight into the problematique of identifying, selecting and conserving cultural landscapes within the framework of the World Heritage Convention. This expert meeting contributes also to the Global Strategy for a more balanced and representative World Heritage List (as adopted by the eighteenth session of the World Heritage Committee in 1994).

The expert meeting then adopted the proposed Agenda (Annex I) and proceeded accordingly in three sessions on the three categories of cultural landscapes below.

An overall conceptual paper was presented by Mr. Meeus (The Netherlands), which reflected the results of a systematic analysis of major landscapes in the European region prepared for the European Environment Agency in 1995. The typology introduced by Mr. de Meeus provided a biogeographical approach to landscape zonations (tundra, taiga, uplands) and also referred to specific landscape types (bocages, openfields, steppes, artificial landscapes and regionally specific landscapes types).

1. Organically evolved landscapes (living/fossil cultural landscapes)

The session was chaired by Mr. Adrian Phillips. Mr. Harald Plachter and Mr. Henry Cleere assisted as rapporteurs.

Cultural landscapes have as their main component the interaction between people and the environment. These interventions are determined by a number of factors including location, topography, climatic conditions etc. - that is, the interventions are adapted to context. Particularly technological, social, economic and political factors have led to the formation of cultural landscapes in Europe.

Examples of human technological intervention can be seen in the Netherlands with the impact *[3] of many centuries of hydraulic works (Schokland and surroundings), and the Fenlands of Eastern

England where a traditional landscape of dykes and windmills exists. The social, economic and political forces of feudalism have resulted in the formation of unmistakable landscapes in Europe (for example, the open fields of Northwest Europe, and the ridge and furrow contoured grazing fields of the English Midlands).

Time and continuity play important roles in the development of cultural landscapes. Some cultural landscapes represent continuous development over millennia whilst others have developed more quickly (for example changes in agricultural landscapes over a period of decades). Living cultural landscapes are dynamic, and never static. Cultural landscapes consist of tangible and intangible components. Taking this into consideration, it might be reasonable to classify and evaluate cultural landscapes according to their functional features as well as with reference to processual parameters.

A flexible *definition of living landscapes* is required - one that recognizes past and future evolution of the landscapes and interactions between people and the environment. Decisions concerning the conservation of cultural landscapes must involve both political input and community decisions. People need to be given the opportunity to say how they want to live. Living cultural landscapes may be defined as embodying past ways of life and as being viable in modern times. It is important to determine how the pace of change can be accommodated as part of the conservation of these cultural landscapes.

Fossil or relict cultural landscapes are well recognized in the United Kingdom (for example, Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites in the United Kingdom). Extraordinary relict landscapes also exist in other parts of Europe (for example, Paphos in Cyprus and Delos in Greece) and include relict industrial landscapes (for example the Mines of Rammelsberg and the Historic Town of Goslar, Germany and Ironbridge Gorge in the United Kingdom). Industrial cultural landscapes in Europe are often under threat and should be a high priority for national survey work in Europe.

Rural landscapes are not only defined by economy, but also by society. For this reason the best form of maintenance is by active living use (for example the vineyards of Europe). The motivation for this maintenance needs to be both social and economic and there is a need for acceptance that continuing maintenance and use of rural landscapes will necessitate some change. There is a need to avoid nostalgia in the conservation of cultural landscapes. An honest and pragmatic approach to the conservation of cultural landscapes is required. It may be questionable whether the protection of rural cultural landscapes as living agricultural landscapes should be attempted when they are not economically viable. Regrettably some cultural landscapes and long established ways of life have now been abandoned, sometimes as a result of political decisions (for example, policies relating to agricultural intensification in Europe).

In Europe many rural landscapes are living cultural landscapes. Selection of a few for World Heritage listing from the many and varied types of organically-evolved landscapes requires agreement on a landscape typology (that is, a framework for making choices) and also agreement on criteria of quality (that is, criteria designed to identify which landscapes of a particular type should be included in the World Heritage List). Whilst acknowledging the usefulness of using both cultural and natural parameters for identifying cultural landscapes, *[4] it is questionable whether broad scale classificatory schemes are appropriate. Classificatory schemes can best be applied at the regional or local level.

An analytical approach to the identification of continuing living and fossil/relict cultural landscapes accommodating multi-dimensional approaches and interactions is needed. More detailed parameters for identifying, assessing and evaluating living cultural landscapes and systematic approaches to the identification of cultural landscapes in the European region by theme and region are required. This could be achieved by using thematic cultural landscape studies based on European comparative studies. These comparative studies should also include reference to those examples of European cultural landscapes that have been exported out of the European region to other parts of the world

(for example the vineyards of Chile, California and Australia and the bocage landscapes of New England in the USA). The identification, assessment and evaluation of the broad spectrum of cultural landscapes in Europe may thus be applied in other regions of the world.

The management of World Heritage cultural landscapes can be a standard-setter for the conservation of the environment as a whole and can establish exemplars of what is required elsewhere. It can help to reinforce the standing of heritage conservation at national and local levels. The conservation of World Heritage cultural landscapes in Europe can demonstrate the principles of sustainable land use and of the maintenance of local diversity which should pervade the management of the rural environment as a whole. Such a complementary relationship might be formalized, through a close link between the World Heritage Convention and the proposed European Landscape Convention. The richness and variety of Europe's living and fossil landscapes, as well as the many threats to this heritage, suggest that both measures are urgently needed.

The Landscape Conservation Working Group (LCWG) of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) Commission on Environmental Strategy and Planning (CESP) in conjunction with the International Association of Landscape Ecology (IALE) is developing pilot studies on threatened landscapes and the determination of suitable methodologies and criteria for the better identification, assessment and evaluation of cultural landscapes in Europe.

The preparation of a universal or European typology of cultural landscapes may be too simplistic and may not respond to the diversity of cultural landscapes or to the political, social, cultural and economic factors shaping cultural landscapes in Europe. An integrated approach to the identification, assessment and evaluation of cultural landscapes in Europe may involve complementary components, including the work of the advisory bodies, the proposed European Landscape Convention, sub-regional perspectives and UNESCO's work.

The Council of Europe's proposed European Landscape Convention is based on the respect and development of human rights and the preservation of local democracy. The Council of Europe recognizes the need to define landscapes flexibly. It is crucially important to determine from members of the community, from people living and working in Europe's landscapes, what values these landscapes have. People want active participation in identification of landscapes in Europe. The Council of Europe is already engaged in a number of regional initiatives that underpin the work of UNESCO in regard to the identification and conservation of European cultural landscapes. It was recognized that collaboration between UNESCO and the Council of Europe is very important and that there are tremendous opportunities for ^[5] synergy between the two organizations in the conservation of European cultural landscapes.

2. Associative cultural landscapes

The session was chaired by Mr. Léon Pressouyre. Mr. Wolfgang Haber and Mr. David Jacques assisted as rapporteurs.

Concerning associative cultural landscapes, the participants underlined that the complex typology (linked to climatic, geological and morphological data and moreover geographical as described in the introductory presentation), responds in Europe to an extreme cultural diversity.

The meeting recalled the sites which are already inscribed on the World Heritage List because of their strong association of landscape elements with religious phenomena (for example Stonehenge, Meteora, Mount Athos, Mont St. Michel, or the Roads of Santiago de Compostella illustrate this category).

The question was raised on the modalities of the association of a landscape to artistic phenomena, noting that it could be related to the works of a famous painter (for example El Greco and Toledo), to a school of painters or to a motif (the Bay of Naples for example). It is not excluded that this

concerns also intangible heritage (music, poetry, philosophy or science).

The discussion permitted to reach a consensus concerning the association to cultural phenomena. Culture can here not be understood in an anthropological sense of the term, as all landscapes would in this case become "cultural", but in a more restrictive sense as outlined in criterion (vi) of the Operational Guidelines. The association of a landscape with the values of the intangible cultural heritage can be retained, but only if these are of universal value. The example of the Lake District, where an ecological concept of respecting nature and landscapes was born, from Wordsworth to Ruskin, was noted.

In the course of the debate, two conceptions of a European strategy for inscription on the World Heritage List have been expressed. For some participants, the large variety and the extraordinary interest for European cultural landscapes should encourage nominations founded on a typology which may be normative.

For most of the participants, this direction fully justified by a scientific approach could be contrary to the Global Strategy adopted by the World Heritage Committee, as it may contribute to reinforce a European reading of the Convention of 1972. Noting that certain associative landscapes have a mainly national value, and that others could benefit from a regional recognition, the speakers suggest putting in place a European subcommittee, which could work in cooperation both with UNESCO and with the experts of the project of the European Landscape Convention.

The submission of nominations for the World Heritage List would be the last step of a process of reflection, preceded by the preparation of national tentative lists and, after a European concertation, to justify an exceptional and universal quality, it was suggested that the *[6] nominations for the World Heritage List should respond to several of the criteria.

In the discussion, the complexity of cultural landscapes and the incongruity between the "associative" and the "outstanding/universal" was emphasized. All landscapes are cultural and even nature conservation is a cultural task, which enriches our culture. The question was raised if the Mont Blanc as an associative cultural landscape would qualify for World Heritage listing. The universality stems from the cultural connotation, however, how can a specific association of one culture be universal.

Another statement outlined that the key to associative landscapes is their power to embody ideas and that it is important to clarify and explain these ideas under the above mentioned qualities (including religious, national pride, artistic and aesthetic). However, cultural diversity is the richness amongst the countries of Europe and that the selection of associative landscapes may be difficult as they have hardly any inter-continental significance, but are of value for one culture.

Another testimony was made concerning the first two cultural landscapes included on the World Heritage List as unique associative and living cultural landscapes, Tongariro National Park (New Zealand) and Uluru Kata- Tjuta National Park (Australia). The powerful religious and cultural associations of these cultural landscapes to their traditional owners are representative of living traditions and beliefs of outstanding universal value. In the discussion comments were made that ideas and beliefs may be also of outstanding universal value and not only their cultural expressions.

In the course of the debate it was furthermore noted that a number of sites already included on the World Heritage List may be associative cultural landscapes. No thorough analysis for this category has yet been performed for the current World Heritage List for the European region.

3. Designed cultural landscapes

The session was chaired by Ms. Carmen Añón Feliú. Mr. Lester Borley and Mr. Rob de Jong assisted as rapporteurs.

In the opening of this session the requirement of the World Heritage Convention to include sites of highest quality from all countries and regions was pointed out. These should be representative of the rich diversity of cultural landscapes in Europe. A further goal of the Convention is to compel people to value and conserve their heritage. Preservation should not denote a stand still but be a harmonious continuation and a revitalization all through life. Of particular importance is the relationship between people and nature which needs to be intensified and, consequently, education has to be a further goal of the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. For this reason an interdisciplinary approach is required.

The discussion focused on the question of a definition of designed cultural landscapes. Humankind can intervene with the landscape but in principle it is acting upon the impulses of the landscape/nature and upon impulses of their specific cultural history. For this reason a designed cultural landscape has to be viewed in a broader context, considering the importance of originality, change and the physical boundaries as well as recognizing the close link between nature and people.

The historical garden was defined as an architectural and art historical monument. However, the question to be asked with regard to a historical garden concerns its illustrative nature and not its characteristic qualities. The aesthetic value which has been accorded to designed cultural landscapes must be converted or rather accommodate, a more anthropological contemplation. No cultural historical studies of historical cultural landscapes has yet been undertaken in Europe. It was recommended that a study group should devise a scheme on the European historical cultural landscapes.

In the course of the discussion the scale of the designed landscapes was noted, i.e. the Lednice Cultural Landscape (Czech Republic) of 200 km² and the cultural landscape of Woerlitz (Germany) of more than 500 km². The size of these cultural landscapes poses specific questions concerning boundaries and management of these sites.

The discussion focussed mainly on the definition of a designed landscape and the importance to recognize the close link between nature and culture and the interaction between the two. In conclusion, the importance was again placed on the close relationship between nature and people and that the maintenance of such designed cultural landscapes has to take into account the human core. It was noted that it is difficult to establish criteria with which to assess the scenic quality of cultural landscapes.

5. Conclusions

The expert meeting was the first to be held on European Cultural Landscapes of Outstanding Universal Value and thus represents the first attempt at implementing the concept of cultural landscapes as part of the Global Strategy for a balanced and representative World Heritage List for the European region. In summary, the expert meeting agreed on the following points:

1. The application of the three cultural landscape categories as outlined in Paragraph 39 of the Operational Guidelines was reaffirmed for the European region.
2. The cultural landscapes of Europe are among the world's richest, most diverse and complex heritage assets and their definition, classification and management are very difficult.
3. The expert meeting addressed the identification, assessment and evaluation of European cultural landscapes. The need for a systematic approach to the regional and thematic identification of European cultural landscapes using tentative lists provided by States Parties as key components was highlighted.

4. The expert meeting stressed the importance of living cultural landscapes embodying past ways of life and having continuing relevance today, in the European context - including rural landscapes - and their development over time (for example in response to new technologies). It is important to acknowledge local and regional perspectives when evaluating the values of these cultural landscapes.

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5. The expert meeting affirmed the nature - culture continuum as presented by the expert meeting on "General Principles and evaluation of Criteria of Natural Heritage Nominations" held at the Parc National de la Vanoise, France from 22 to 24 March. Untouched nature no longer exists. Nature conservation in Europe does not often integrate the protection and development of cultural landscapes. However, the protection of cultural landscapes in Europe should not be marginal, but a central part of heritage conservation in Europe.
6. World Heritage conservation can perform a leadership role in the protection of Europe's diverse landscapes. Whilst it is recognized that there is a strong political imperative to ensure the balance of the World Heritage List by not including too many more European properties or cultural landscapes in the World Heritage List, Europe is particularly well endowed with cultural landscapes. Only a selection of these landscapes can be inscribed in the World Heritage List. Cultural landscapes of European, national or regional value will need to be protected by other means, including additional national legal protection.
7. The expert meeting highlighted parallel initiatives and opportunities for collaborative approaches to World Heritage cultural landscape conservation (for example, the proposed European Landscape Convention and other European legal instruments).

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Annex I

**Agenda for the Expert Meeting on European Cultural
Landscapes of Outstanding Universal Value
Vienna, Austria**

20 April 1996

- 19.00 Welcome by the Austrian National Commission for UNESCO, Austria Nostra, and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre
- 20.00 Dinner for participants

21 April 1996

- 09.00 Opening of the meeting (Austrian UNESCO National Commission for UNESCO, UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Ministry for Educational and Cultural Affairs)
- Mechtild RÖSSLER, UNESCO World Heritage Centre: Introduction to the meeting
- 09.30 Jens de MEUUS: Systematic analysis of landscape types in Europe
- 10.15 Break
- 10.30- Chairperson : Adrian PHILLIPPS
- 11.30 **Part I : Living/fossil cultural landscapes** Summary presentations by the rapporteurs

Harald PLACHTER and Henry CLEERE

11.30- Panel discussion with participants and authors of invited written papers presented on the
13.00 living/fossil cultural landscapes in Europe

13.00- Lunch hosted by the Austrian National Commission for UNESCO
14.30

14.30- Chairperson : Léon PRESSOUYRE **Part II : Associative cultural landscapes** Summary
15.45 presentations by the rapporteurs Wolfgang HABER and David JACQUES

15.45- Coffee break
16.00

16.00- Panel discussion with participants and authors of invited written papers presented on
16.30 associative cultural landscapes in Europe

16.30- Chairperson : Carmen ANON FELIU
17.30

Part III : Designed cultural landscapes Summary presentations by the rapporteurs Lester
BORLEY and Rob DE JONG

17.30- Panel discussion with participants and authors of invited written papers presented on
19.00 designed cultural landscapes in Europe

19.00 Dinner

21.00 Open discussion on future perspectives and cooperation

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Annex 2

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Annex 3

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A systematic analysis of major landscapes in the European continent

H. Plachter (Germany)
Ecological Aspects of Central European Cultural Landscapes

B. H. Green (United Kingdom)
Protecting European Cultural Landscapes

2. Living cultural landscapes

A. Phillips (IUCN/CNPPA)

Living/Fossil Cultural Landscapes: Introductory Remarks

M. Dower (Working Group European Landscape Convention)
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P. Fowler (United Kingdom)
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C. Marin (Spain)
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M. Robinson/Scottish Natural Heritage (United Kingdom)
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D. Murtas (Italy)
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M. Fischer (Croatia)
Croatia's Cultural Landscapes

P. Doukellis (Greece)
Note sur les paysages exceptionnels de la Grèce

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Designed Landscapes: Art and Nature

W. Haber (Germany)
Report on a visit to the Serra de Sintra (in preparation of the World Heritage nomination)

J. Cardim Ribeiro (Portugal)
Le paysage culturel de Sintra: un lieu de tolérance culturelle

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D. Jacques (United Kingdom)
The importance of historic cultural landscapes. In: Deutscher Rat für Landschaftspflege, Nr. 66, December 1995, Pflege und Entwicklung der Potsdamer Kulturlandschaften, pp. 42-51

O. Kuca (Czech Republic)
A comparative Study, Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape (part of the World Heritage nomination file)

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D. Rambaud (France)
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F. Benito (Spain)
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A. d'Antin/ O. Cebes (France)
Les Chemins de Saint-Jacques en France

M. Rosaria Nappi (Italy)
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Ch. Storelli (Working Group European Landscape Convention)

Groupe de Travail: "Convention Européenne du Paysage". Fondements, structure et procédure d'établissement du projet de Convention européenne du Paysage

Alliance for Nature

Die Alliance for Nature und die Welterbe-Konvention

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Categories of Cultural Landscapes (Extract from the Operational Guidelines)

Action Plan for the Future (Cultural Landscapes)

List of Participants (as of 15 April 1996)

additional paper submitted on 21 April 1996:

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The cultural landscape of Woerlitz