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Digital Educational Geoinformatic Methodologies for Monitoring Landscape – GEOLAND

Intellectual Output 3

EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION POLICY OUTREACH: NATIONAL POLICY RESPONSES

Output 3: Policy Outreach: Landscape Protection in Europe – national case studies

Policy Recommendation Report

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Report Methodology

Partners used a template survey (Annex 1) developed during the project to research and collect landscape policy information from Greece, Spain, Belgium (Flanders) and Bulgaria. Specifically, the trainees in collaboration with all the partners collected valuable information about the status of current landscape policy implementation in partner countries, leading to this policy recommendations document.

Following the publication of this report, the higher education partners and their students can reach out to education policy stakeholders from their countries and communicate the results of the report in order to demonstrate how policy reform takes place.

Implementing the European Landscape Policy at national scale

Bulgaria

The Republic of Bulgaria signed the European Landscape Convention and ratified it by law during the 39th National Assembly on 13.10.2004 (announced in State Gazette No. 22 on 15.03.2005).

In Bulgaria, landscape planning is realized primarily in the field of urban planning and architecture, where landscape has the meaning of a visual and aesthetic category. The state policy on landscape management, planning and protection (SPLMPP) is implemented by the Minister of Regional Development and Public Works through the National Landscape Council (NSL). The NSL is established to discuss and make decisions on basic landscape issues under the Minister of Regional Development and Public Works.

The SPLMPP is carried out by the competent authorities within the meaning of this law and is integrated into sectoral policies:

- Construction
- Transport
- Energy
- Agriculture
- Tourism
- Ecology
- Culture
- Education
- Industry
- Health care

The territories for active implementation of landscape measures and aesthetic shaping are defined within the General Development Plans, as part of the Spatial Development Act. The General Development Plans are the basis for the overall arrangement of the territories of the municipalities, parts of them or separate settlements with their lands. The provisions of the general development plans, which determine the general structure and the predominant

purpose of the territories, the type and purpose of the technical infrastructure and the protection of the environment and the objects of the cultural and historical heritage, are mandatory in the preparation of the detailed development plans.

The data on the overhead networks and facilities of the technical infrastructure, on the transport facilities (railways, roads, bridges, fords, ports and others), on the hydrography, on the plant and soil cover, the landscape and on the relief are extracted from the topographic and specialized maps and registers.

In relation to technical eligibility, the people permitted to carry out research, design, control, construction and supervision activities are the ones possessing a technical qualification such as "architect", "civil engineer", "engineer", "urban planner" or "landscape architect".

Territories that have a high natural landscape, ecological and cultural value, but are not protected by a special law are part of the scheme for "Territory with preventive device protection mode".

Another important piece of legislation is the Protected Territories Act, which regulates the categories of protected areas, their purpose and regime preservation and use, announcement and management.

The Environmental Protection Act, regulates public relations related to the protection of the environment for current and future generations, the preservation of biological diversity and the protection and use of the components of the environment among others.

The Law on Geodesy and Cartography, regulates the organization, management, financing and implementation of the activities in the field of geodesy and cartography, carried out by the bodies of the executive power, the bodies of local self-government and by legal entities and individuals.

Finally, in 2012 there was an attempt to legislate a dedicated Landscape Act, which was heavily criticized and speculated for many reasons and at the end never went through.

Flanders (Belgium)

The aim of the European Landscape Convention in Flanders is to promote the protection, management and development of the landscape and to establish European cooperation in the field of landscape care.
- Signature: 20/10/2000, Ratification and proclamation: 18/07/2003; Decree published in Official Gazette: 05/09/2003, Publication of text in Official Gazette: 24/11/2004
- International ratification: 28/10/2004; Entry into force: 01/02/2005

Since September 2021 Flanders has had a comprehensive policy framework for landscape planning and protection. The Flemish government has implemented various measures to ensure the preservation, management, and sustainable development of landscapes in the region.

The key instrument in Flanders for landscape planning and protection is the "Flemish Spatial Policy Plan" (Vlaams Ruimtelijk Structuurplan or VRP). The VRP provides guidelines and objectives for spatial planning, including landscape management, throughout Flanders. It aims to balance different land uses, protect valuable landscapes, and promote sustainable development.
Link: https://omgeving.vlaanderen.be/nl/ruimtelijk-beleid-en-planning/ruimtelijk-beleid/ruimtelijk-structuurplan-vlaanderen
The whole document can be downloaded from
https://omgeving.vlaanderen.be/sites/default/files/2022-01/RSV2011%20%282%29_0.pdf

Additionally, the "Flemish Landscape Decree" (Vlaams Landschapsdecreet) provides legal provisions for landscape protection and management. It defines the concept of a "recognized landscape" (erfgoedlandschap) and establishes procedures for the recognition, protection, and development of such landscapes. The decree also sets out requirements for landscape planning, design, and assessment in spatial projects. Link:
http://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/cgi_loi/change_lg.pl?language=nl&la=N&table_name=wet&cn=2013071244

Furthermore, there are regional landscape organizations in Flanders that play a crucial role in landscape management and promotion. These organizations, known as "Regionale Landschappen," work on a local and regional level to protect and enhance landscapes, often in collaboration with local communities and stakeholders.

Greece

Regarding Greece, Article 24 of the Constitution mandates the preservation of the local, residential, and cultural environments, which unquestionably includes the landscape.
The incorporation of landscape into regional and urban planning policies, as well as into cultural, environmental, agricultural, social, and economic policies, as well as other policies that may have a direct or indirect impact on landscape, is one of the general measures that Contracting States are required to take, and is likely the most significant in practice.

It is emphasized the importance of building a culture of respect for the environment in society as a whole as well as the necessity of developing a general landscape policy at all levels of public authorities, ministries, regions, and municipalities.
In Greece, the guidelines of the National Landscape Strategy (NLS) have been formulated.

The situation in Greece:
The adoption of Law 3827/2010, which ratified the Convention, marked the start of a new era of landscape regulation under the NLS with the objective of establishing an integrated landscape policy, which is still a problem.

There is a serious landscape deficit in common law, despite the implicit constitutional provision for the protection of the landscape as a composition of the natural and cultural environment, and in fact from the perspective of sustainable development (Art. 24.1), as

well as the link between landscape and spatial and urban planning and the quality of the built environment (Art. 24.2) and the protection of monuments (Art. 24.6).

A modern understanding of the environment as a setting for living has not been developed as a result of the fragmented nature of landscape legislation across sectoral policies and its lack of a cohesive orientation.

Archaeological law was the first to incorporate landscape, followed by environmental law. Landscape was first included in planning and zoning regulations as a component of natural and cultural heritage using zoning and urban planning techniques (Housing Control Zone, specifications of the General Urban Plans and Open City Organisation Plans), while statutory guidelines for its protection are contained in the General Framework for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development (with emphasis on the protection of the countryside) and in the Special Spatial Planning Framework for Renewable Energy Sources, which includes a separate Annex on the rules for the integration of wind farms into the landscape.

The recording and classification of landscapes in the Regional Spatial Planning Frameworks and the corresponding specifications of the year 2011 was a significant step; however, the pertinent chapter is absent from the 2018 specifications, and the explicit incorporation of the landscape guidelines of Law No. 3827/2010 in the new Athens-Attica Regulatory Plan (Law 4277/2014, Article 22 "Attic Landscape") is also expected to be followed up on.

The lack of cooperation between environmental and spatial legislation on landscape issues is a significant drawback, even though the problem lends itself to a synthetic approach. In conclusion, at the level of Greek common law, landscape deficit, fragmentation, and an unstable attitude of the regulatory legislator can be identified.

Nevertheless, a clause in a recent law (Article 10 of Law 4759/2021), which specifically lists landscape as a component of Special Protection Areas and Special Status Areas, as well as references made at that workshop by the secretary general of the ministry of the environment to the relationship between the EST and spatial (land use and urban planning) planning, as well as the announcements of initiatives and the adoption of new measures for the landscape, such as the present, all point to the importance of the landscape [1].

Spain

There is a National Plan for Cultural Landscapes
https://www.culturaydeporte.gob.es/planes-nacionales/dam/jcr:da397288-43a3-4ba4-ad32-7e279d29c953/folleto-leer-plan-paisaje.pdf
https://oibc.oei.es/uploads/attachments/179/PAISAJES_CULTURALES.pdf
https://www.upv.es/contenidos/CAMUNISO/info/U0645077.pdf

The National Plan for Cultural Landscape (PNPC) establishes that cultural landscape is the result of the interaction in time of people and the natural environment, whose expression is a territory perceived and valued for its cultural qualities, product of a process and support of the identity of a community. Taking into account precedents such as the World Heritage Convention UNESCO dial (1992) and the European Landscape Convention (2000), the PNPC

advances in the concept of landscape and offers a definition inclusive and consensual that unites the spatial dimensions social, temporal and perceptive, with the human being in first person. The cultural interest of these landscapes is not a product of their beauty but of the intrinsic value they possess from the cultural point of view.

The National Plan has as its general objective the safeguarding of landscapes of cultural interest, understanding by safeguard the measures in walks to guarantee the viability of the landscape culture, including identification and characterization actions, documentation, research, protection, improvement, revitalization, covering the necessary aspects of definition, delimitation, component analysis and management; all this from a sustainable development perspective.

Given the particular characteristics of the cultural landscape as a patrimonial asset, derived from its complexity, the high vulnerability of their values and the scant and scattered support of its safeguard, the implementation of the Plan should contribute to achieving, among others, the following specific objectives:

- Identification, characterization and safeguarding
    - Establish agreed bases for the identification and characterization of landscapes of special cultural interest.
    - Prepare a proposal for landscapes of special cultural interest, which includes, in addition to its identification and characterization, its assessment.
    - Establish objectives, guidelines and specific lines of action for the safeguarding of landscapes of special cultural interest, which enhance their character and values, compatible with their evolution and development, and favor their interpretation and public enjoyment.
- Social awareness and political recognition
    - Promote and encourage social recognition and awareness of public administrations and citizens about the dimension and cultural values of the landscape.
    - Contribute to the incorporation of criteria to safeguard values cultural aspects of the landscape in sectoral policies, plans and actions with incidence in the territory.
- International, national and regional cooperation
    - Promote cooperation with policies and networks of cultural landscapes at European level, specifically in terms of study and safeguarding of landscapes of cross-border nature, in accordance with the provisions of the European Landscape Convention.
    - Promote cooperation between the different ministerial departments that have powers in this regard.
    - Also promote cooperation between Autonomous Communities, and between them and the General State Administration in matters of criteria and objectives of action, especially in cultural landscapes shared by more than one Autonomous community.
    - Generate documentation bases, knowledge and assessment for the inclusion of Cultural Landscapes on the UNESCO World Heritage List

In any case, the National Cultural Landscape Plan shall be raised in cooperation with the Autonomous Communities and should be nourished by the exchange of experiences and the collaboration between competent public and private institutions, and provide technical assistance to national and international organizations that request it.

Lines of action

As a starting proposal, 9 lines of work are formulated, grouped into three general sections in which all aspects can be included in the that it is considered necessary to deepen as a matter of priority.

A) Documentation and research
- Proposal 1: preparation of an Inventory/Record of landscapes of cultural interest
- Proposal 2: elaboration of Catalogues
- Proposal 3: promotion of characterization studies of cultural landscapes.
- Proposal 4: research projects.

B) Training and Diffusion
- Proposal 5: training actions
- Proposal 6: dissemination actions

C) Interventions
- Proposal 7: development of master plans
- Proposal 8: intervention projects.
- Proposal 9: promotion of cultural tourism

Evaluation criteria and selection

The selection of landscapes of special interest culture will meet the following assessment criteria:

A. Intrinsic values:
- Typological representativeness
- Exemplary
- Territorial significance
- Authenticity
- Integrity
- Uniqueness

B. Heritage values:
- Historical significance
- Social significance
- Environmental significance
- Processual significance (productive activities, rituals, demonstrations, etc.)

C. Potential values and feasibility:
- Legal situation that allows your guardianship and management
- Fragility and vulnerability

National level Planning for the future and its implementation

Planning for the future proposes reforms of national planning systems with the aim of streamlining and modernising the planning process (Karimi and Adams, 2019) and in support of the goals of the European Landscape Convention. The purpose is to bring a design focus and increased sustainability, with contributions to infrastructure and enable more land to be made available for development where it is needed.

Bulgaria

An important legislative document is the *National Recovery and Resilience Plan* in its goal to invest the restoration of key ecosystems for the climate, in line with the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the goals of the European Green Deal, including:

- Provision of connectivity of Natura 2000 network, restoration of traditional landscapes and creation of ecological corridors;
- Restoring traditional forest landscapes, reducing the negative impact of fires on biodiversity, and raising the awareness of young people on biodiversity and climate issues

Another document is the *National Program For Preservation, Sustainable Use and Recovery Functions of Soils* 2020-2030. The purpose of the program is the protection of soil resources and their sustainable use, as well as implementation of good practices to prevent damage on soils.

The *"Long-Term Strategy For The Mitigation Of Climate Change Until 2050 For The Republic Of Bulgaria*", presents the Bulgarian position and priorities in relation to the low-carbon economy and the achievement of climate neutrality by 2050, including environmental impacts and land use / land use changes.

Flanders (Belgium)

The Flemish government has been actively implementing policies and initiatives to plan for the future and address various challenges in the region. These efforts encompass multiple areas, including spatial planning, sustainability, mobility, and economic development. However, it's important to note that specific details and progress may have evolved since then.

Spatial Planning: The Flemish government has a comprehensive spatial planning framework in place, which includes the Flemish Spatial Policy Plan (VRP). The VRP sets long-term goals for spatial development, taking into account factors such as land use, housing, infrastructure, and environmental protection.

Sustainability: Flanders has been emphasizing sustainability in its planning and development policies. Efforts have been made to promote energy efficiency, renewable energy sources, and sustainable construction practices. The government has also introduced measures to protect and enhance green spaces and biodiversity.

Mobility: The Flemish government recognises the importance of efficient and sustainable mobility. Initiatives have been implemented to improve public transportation, promote cycling and walking infrastructure, and reduce reliance on private cars. Plans for better integration between different modes of transport are also being pursued.

Economic Development: Flanders aims to ensure sustainable economic growth and prosperity for the future. The government has been focusing on fostering innovation, supporting research and development, and attracting investment in key sectors. Efforts have also been made to enhance digital infrastructure and promote a favorable business climate.

Landscape as a factor when considering spatial interventions

The starting point is the preservation and development (strengthening) of the diversity and recognisability of landscapes in Flanders. To use the existing spatial coherence between the physical system and the natural, agricultural and settlement structure when considering spatial interventions, the concept of landscape needs to be operationalised. This can be done through two tracks :
1) an indicative selection of structuring landscape elements and components of the different landscapes in Flanders and
2) the formulation of differentiated development perspectives for characteristic delineated characteristic elements and components of the landscape, intact landscapes and open-space connections.

Greece

The findings of Kyvelou and Gourgiotis research [2] indicate that (a) the ELC gave Greek spatial planning a new lease of life by providing the means to manage and coordinate landscape policy, positively influencing the development of the spatial planning paradigm; and (b) the decentralized approach used in the study identified landscapes of particular value at the regional level, allowing them to be given priority in the implementation of coordinated governance arrangements and management actions. A general conclusion is that, both on land and at sea, the implementation of landscape policy depends on the inclusion of evolutionary trends in planning, including an evolutionary perspective for the landscape itself, viewed as a complex social-ecological system. However, the implementation of landscape policy continues to depend on the underlying spatial planning level (Local Spatial Plans, Special Spatial Plans).

Spain

Basically “Planning for the future” linked to the Landscape appears in the governmental Strategy for Spain 2050. It mentions landscape in several occasions, such as in climate change and water retention (transformation of ecosystems), variation in production of goods in agriculture and food industry contributing in carbon neutrality, protection of biodiversity and regeneration and vertebration of the landscape. Also comments that agriculture and forest landscape may work as tool for fire risk areas management. At last, burnt zones should be managed towards fire and climate change resilient landscape.

How is landscape designated at the national level? Are there special areas defined for protection, management, planning? Please describe.

Bulgaria

Currently, protected areas cover about 5% of the country's territory, although we are in one of the first places in Europe in terms of rich and preserved nature. The full management of the network of protected areas is still a big challenge for Bulgaria. The effectiveness of the network is low and the protected areas that make it up are almost universally lacking in connectivity. Further measures should be taken immediately for its expansion and strengthening as well as for its adequate management.

Of the Bulgarian reserves after 1970, 16 were declared biosphere reserves under the UNESCO program "Man and the Biosphere". Bulgaria has 3 national parks, they include many reserves, natural attractions and protected areas: Rila, Pirin and Central Balkan.

The heart of Bulgaria's efforts to protect nature and important landscapes – both in the past and in the future - is its system of protected areas via the Protected Territories Act. The creation of this system dates back to 1933, when the first nature reserves in Bulgaria were announced - Silkosia and Parangalitsa. The following year, the Bayuvi dupki reserve and the Vitosha National Park were announced – at a time when only a few countries in Europe had already created national parks.

Protected localities are a category of protected areas in Bulgaria. At the end of 2017, 565 protected areas were designated. Territories with remarkable landscapes, including those positively influenced by man, habitats of endangered and rare species of animals and plants, and biocenoses are declared as such. Protected areas are managed to preserve landscape components.

Another important aspect is addressed via the Biological Diversity Act, where, along with biological and geological diversity, among the goals of the national ecological network is the long-term protection of landscape diversity.

In addition, the Red Book of the Republic of Bulgaria is a list of threatened, endangered and extinct biological species living on the territory of Bulgaria.

NATURA 2000 in Bulgaria

The process of creating the Natura 2000 ecological network in Bulgaria began in 2002 with the adoption of the Biodiversity Act, which introduced the norms of the two European directives. According to it, protected areas are declared in the country as part of the National Ecological Network. These are places on the territory and water area of the country that meet the requirements for the presence of plant and animal species important for biological diversity, and types of natural habitats included in the Annexes of the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive. There also a dedicated interactive map of NATURA 2000 protected areas in Bulgaria, which allows you to view the territory covered by each area, as well as to search for an area by name or code.

Flanders (Belgium)

In Flanders, landscape designation and protection are primarily carried out at regional and local levels rather than the national level. The Flemish government has established various mechanisms and tools to recognize, protect, manage, and plan landscapes in the region.

Recognized Landscapes: The Flemish Landscape Decree (Vlaams Landschapsdecreet) provides a framework for the recognition of "recognized landscapes" (erfgoedlandschap). These landscapes are identified based on their historical, cultural, ecological, or scenic value. The decree sets out procedures and criteria for the recognition of such landscapes, and once recognized, they are subject to specific protection measures and planning guidelines.

Regional Landscape Organizations: Flanders has a network of regional landscape organizations known as "Regionale Landschappen." These organizations work closely with local communities, stakeholders, and government authorities to manage and enhance landscapes at a regional level. They undertake various activities such as conservation, restoration, landscape planning, education, and community engagement.

Spatial Planning Instruments: Landscape considerations are integrated into the spatial planning framework of Flanders. The Flemish Spatial Policy Plan (VRP) provides guidelines and objectives for spatial development, including landscape management. It aims to balance different land uses, protect valuable landscapes, and promote sustainable development. Local and regional spatial implementation plans also incorporate landscape planning measures.

Protected Areas: Flanders has several protected areas designated for their natural or cultural value. These include nature reserves, protected landscapes, and heritage sites. These areas are subject to specific legal protection, management plans, and conservation measures.

Greece

The Greek Constitution 1975/1986/2001 does not explicitly refer to landscape protection. But it also adds that "the protection of the natural and cultural environment constitutes a duty of the State and a right of every person". In light of this, it is suggested that the landscape is indirectly protected in the context of environmental protection, taking into account the holistic nature of the landscape, the natural and cultural components of which are taken into consideration.

Regarding how closely the legal system is tied to protecting the environment, Greek law does not contain any special laws that are only focused on protecting the environment. However, law that deals with both the protection of cultural heritage and the natural environment, principally through the creation of protected areas, includes provisions for landscape protection [3], [4].

Spain

3.1. Law 16/1985. Spanish Historical Heritage.

The approach to the concept of landscape is included in the figure Historical site, defined as the place or natural setting linked to events or memories of the past, to popular traditions, cultural or natural creations and works of man, that have historical, ethnological, paleontological or anthropological value. (15.4)

3.2. Land Law 8/2007
Establishes the principle of sustainable territorial and urban development whereby policies aimed at the regulation, management, occupation and transformation of the land, must promote the rational use of resources, including cultural heritage and the landscape; that is, it recognizes the landscape as a resource. It incorporates as rights and It is the duty of the citizen to enjoy the natural and urban landscape, and respect it. The definition in positive aspect of rural land includes the landscape values to be conserved and protected.

3.3. Law 42/2007 on Natural Heritage and Biodiversity.
It assumes the definition of landscape according to the European Landscape Convention; set figures specific for the protection of the landscape in protected natural spaces; and includes the landscape in the management of natural resources. But very especially recognizes the landscape as potential to give coherence and connectivity to the spaces of the Network Natura 2000. than almost a quarter of the country's territory.

3.4. Law 45/2007 on sustainable development of rural areas.
Treatment of the landscape as an asset in the rural environment. Introduce the landscape as a resource and as a task of protection and conservation. Specifically, as one of the objectives for improve the environmental quality of rural areas; the inclusion of activities linked to the maintenance and protection of landscapes protected in the National Strategic Plan of the Natural heritage; landscape conservation as one of the measures on the economic diversification; o Respect for the quality and integrity of the rural landscape in the infrastructure, equipment and basic services.

The First Sustainable Rural Development Program for the period 2010-2014 (Royal Decree 752/2010 of June 4) incorporates the guideline (4.1.3) "to put into practice the provisions of the European Landscape Convention" in the field of rural landscape, within Nature conservation and natural resource management measures (4.1) included in Axis 4 Environment, which aims to "achieve a high degree of environmental quality in rural areas, preventing the deterioration of natural heritage, the landscape and biodiversity, or facilitating its recovery, through management integrated use of the territory for different activities, the improvement of planning and the management of natural resources and the reduction of pollution in areas rural”

3.5. Royal Decree 1/2008, of January 11, which approves the text
Consolidated Law on Environmental Impact Assessment of projects.
Article 1. Object.
1. The purpose of this Law is to establish the legal regime applicable to the evaluation of environmental impact of projects consisting of carrying out works, installations or any other activity included in its annexes I and II, according to the terms established in it.

2. This Law aims to ensure the integration of environmental aspects in the project in question by incorporating the environmental impact assessment into the authorization or approval procedure of the former by the substantive body.
3. The environmental impact assessment will identify, describe and evaluate in a way appropriate, depending on each particular case and in accordance with this Law, the direct and indirect effects of a project on the following factors:
- Human beings, fauna and flora.
- The soil, water, air, climate and landscape.
- Material goods and cultural heritage.
- The interaction between the factors mentioned above.

3.6. Instrument of Ratification of the European Landscape Convention (number 176 of the Council of Europe), of November 6, 2007. BOE No. 31, of February 5, 2008

In the ratification text of Spain it is indicated "...I come to approve and ratify whatever in the same is provided, as by virtue of the present I approve and ratify it, promising comply with it, observe it and ensure that it is complied with and observed punctually in all its parties...", incorporating the content of the Agreement.

Which organisations are involved at the national level? In what ways are students and student groups involved?

Bulgaria

In general, the main policy making body in this area is the Bulgarian Ministry of Environment and Water develops and implements the state policy on environmental protection in the public interest. The MEW implements its role via the following main bodies:

Regional Development and Water Inspections

These are the administrative structures under the Ministry, ensuring the implementation of the state policy on environmental protection at the regional level. They carry out their activities on the territory of one or several districts, having regulatory, information and control functions.

In carrying out the regulatory functions, RISWs develop or participate in the development of documents in the field of environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources and carry out activities related to state policy at the regional level.

Basin Directorates (BD)

BDs have management, regulatory, control and information functions. In carrying out water management functions, BDs develop, update and implement River Basin Management Plans, Flood Risk Management Plans and Marine Strategy.

Directorates of National Parks (DNP)

According to the Protected Territories Act, these are specialized regional bodies of the Ministry, three DNPs: DNP Rila, DNP Pirin and DNP Central Balkan - are distinguished, which carry out management and control in dedicated places. The main functions of the directorates are related to the management and protection of the national parks (remarkable landscapes and non-living natural objects) like implementing their management plans; assignment of activities provided for in the management plans and in the development plans and projects; coordination and control over activities carried out by other bodies, organizations and persons; implementation of educational and informational programs and projects; environmental component monitoring and database maintenance; penalizing offenders.

Environmental Executive Agency (EEA)

The EEA is an administration under the Ministry of Environment and Water, with the main mission of working for , applying national legislation and international experience, providing environmental monitoring and nationally representative data on its condition. The EEA manages the national environmental monitoring system is created and functions in accordance with Art. 1, item 7 of the Environmental Protection Act. The system provides timely and reliable information about the state of the elements of the environment and the factors affecting it, based on which to make analyses, assessments and forecasts to

substantiate the activities of protection and protection of the environment from harmful effects.

NGOs

1. Federation of Nature Protection Associations "Green Balkans" is a national non-governmental, nature protection organization. The organization was founded in 1988 and is the oldest environmental protection NGO in Bulgaria.
2. The Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds is the largest Bulgarian non-governmental organization for the protection of nature.
3. The Information and Learning Center for Ecology is a non-governmental environmental protection organization established in 1992. Their activities are aimed at increasing the information provision of citizens and institutions in Bulgaria on the problems of environmental protection, the rational use of natural resources, training of groups by activists, members of non-governmental organizations, etc. on the mentioned problems.
4. The Ecological Association "For the Earth" is concentrated in several campaigns and projects aimed at specific areas of environmental protection and restoration.
5. The Bulgarian Union for the Protection of the Rhodopes aims to preserve the natural, cultural and historical wealth of the Rhodopes, incite an environmental culture and work for sustainable economic development and environmentally friendly use of the Rhodopes.

Flanders (Belgium)

Greece

In Greece the Directorate of Spatial Planning, Ministry of the Environment and Energy of Greece is mainly responsible for the implementation of the ELC. In addition, there are also some NGOs and think-tanks that constantly work on the ELC related issues.

An example is the Hellenic Society for Environment and Culture, the Scientific Society for Planning Law and Town and Country Planning, and the Mediterranean Institute for Nature and Anthropos (MedINA), three organizations active in the fields of environmental protection, spatial planning, and urban planning, organized an online workshop on "Landscape and Spatial Planning" on February 17, 2022. This session produced some very intriguing ideas about the requirement under the law and the critical requirement for including landscape at all scales of spatial design.

Beyond this, it was emphasized the necessity of adopting a general landscape policy at all levels of public authority, including ministries, regions, and municipalities, as well as the vital significance of creating a culture of respect for the landscape in society at large.

Furthermore, besides NGOs, universities also participate in the state think tanks organized by the state for developing Landscape policy legislation.

Students' involvement

The Environmental Awareness and Awareness Programme for Students is currently being implemented. It aims to foster students' knowledge of, awareness of, and direct interaction with the biodiversity of the protected area as well as the development of experiential and investigative thinking skills in the natural environment.

Students have also visited the protected region, and seminars and presentations have been organized in schools nearby and in the protected area itself.

In order to inform, educate, and train young scientists, farmers, and teachers on the protection and conservation of biodiversity in the coastal area, the lake, as well as to promote the area as a place for the development of ecotourism, the ground-breaking "Karla School" project was implemented in the years 2017–2019 with funding from the Green Fund [1].

Spain

Firstly the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge is responsible and the third vice presidency of the Government. The General Directorate of Rural Development and Forest Policy is also involved.

Some organisations concerned include the International Association for Spatial Planning (FUNDICOT), the Spanish Association of Landscapers, the Center for Landscape and Territory Studies of Andalusia, the Higher Council for Scientific Research (CESIC): Laboratory of Landscape Archeology and Remote Sensing (LabTel). Other agencies include the Heritage cluster of the Moncloa Campus of International Excellence, Superior Technical School of Architecture of Madrid (ETSAM): Group of Cultural Landscape, Aranjuez Cultural Landscape Foundation, Fundación Beulas. Huesca, Dukes of Soria Foundation. Landscape Institute, the Marcelino Botin Foundation. Rural development. Heritage Program and Territory, the Fundación Miguel Aguiló, ICOMOS Spain. International Scientific Committee of Cultural Landscapes, Observatory of Sustainability of Spain. Alcala de Henares, Observatori del Paisatge. Generalitat de Cataluña and Universidad Rey Juan Carlos I de Madrid.

There are also various Universities, that allow the partial participation of students.

At the national level, how is participation of the public, authorities and other bodies (including students) organised?

Bulgaria

A very important participation tool is the Ministerial Council's "Public consultation portal" which facilitates the feedback about various legislation issues for all stakeholders interested (including public bodies, NGOs and individuals).

The two main government bodies i.e. the Ministry of Environment and Water (MOEW) and the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, facilitate public participation via various initiatives such as:

- Dedicated procedures for public consultation, which allows stakeholders to submit their feedback and suggestions on the published projects, funding opportunities, legislation etc.
- "Knowledge on Natura 2000" competition – is the first of 3 national competitions aiming to to increase the knowledge in the general public and stakeholders about the Natura 2000 network;
- "Green support for a sustainable future" – a student contest for high academic achievements;
- National Campaign "Clean Environment" – aiming to create a direct positive impact on the environment and a positive attitude among people for the preservation of natural resources;

Other public participation initiatives include The LIFE project "Salt of Life" of the Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation, in which BDZP is a partner organization, won second place in the 7th session of the Council of Europe Landscape Award (2020-2021). This project is implemented in the Natura 2000 area Atanasovsko Lake (BG0000270), which is one of the key hotspots of biodiversity in the Black Sea biogeographic region. Project actions directly addressed all threats to the Atanasovo Lake lagoon and communicated the importance of the salt pans to Atanasovo Lake, creating an allusion to the importance of salt, hence the project's motto: Salt of Life.

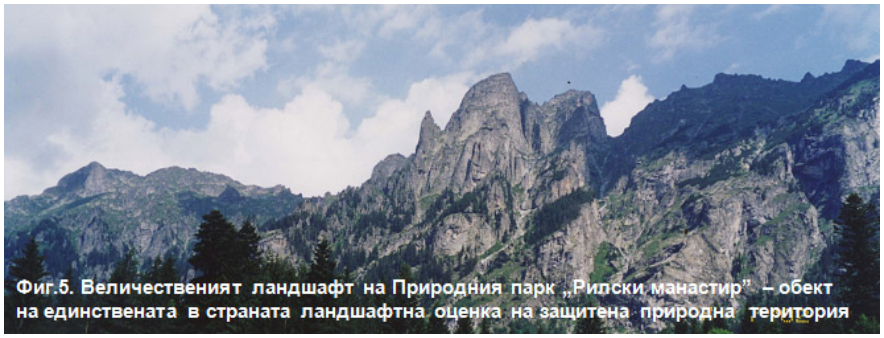
The Union of Parks and Landscape Specialists in Bulgaria, have implemented the major projects "Make Sofia green for us and our children" and "Making the urban landscape green", compiled and distributed the Charter for saving Bulgarian parks and gardens, worked with students and implemented the only in the country landscape assessment of a protected area - the "Rila Monastery" Nature Park, and later joined "Citizens for a Green Sofia" - a community of associations from different metropolitan areas.

Imagery:
- Image 1: The "Make Sofia green for us and our children" project aimed to conserve parks and gardens
- Image 2: The "Dress the tree" project aimed to protect urban trees
- Image 3: The Rila

Фиг. 3. Проектът „Да озеленим София за нас и нашите деца" с участието на местните граждани и на екологични организации

Фиг.4. Учениците от средния курс с огромно желание участват в проекта на ССПЛБ „Да облечем дървото", насочен към опазване на дърветата в градовете

Monastery landscape - the only landscape assessment of a protected area in Bulgaria



Фиг.5. Величественият ландшафт на Природния парк „Рилски манастир" – обект на единствената в страната ландшафтна оценка на защитена природна територия

Flanders (Belgium)

Greece

Greece has a modest tradition of including the public in planning and decision-making, and it has been remarked that there is a dearth of a strong sense of place [5], [6]. In considering participation specifically for landscape assessment and planning, Bucheckder [7] emphasizes how it takes time to establish a culture of participation, with the public and stakeholders progressively learning from the engagement procedures themselves and establishing trust in them. He emphasizes how the discussion of landscape might help close the gap between citizens and the government.

However, the competent authorities, the Ministries and the Regions, seek, through consultation, the participation of organizations and citizens in the process of recording opinions that will be taken into account in the formulation of the Programs. In this frame the OpenGOV.gr (the greek open government initiative) platform has been developed to support the consultation process of the greek legislation.

Almost every piece of draft legislation or even policy initiative by the government, are posted in a blog like platform prior to their submission to parliament. Citizens and organisations can post their comments, suggestions and criticisms article-by-article. In addition, the OpenGOV.gr Labs is an open innovation initiative that brings together ideas and proposals from citizens, the public and the private sectors. Labs.OpenGov.gr attempts to release the power of decentralised knowledge and explore new ways to tackle modern public administration problems. In this frame, issues related to Landscape legislation, monitoring and management are discussed and resolved through OpenGOV.gr platform.

The Landscape Public Participation Tools (LPPT) Program has been established to highlight the significance of landscape management and citizen participation in Greece, MedINA created and is presently implementing a program with the Society for the Protection of Prespa (SPP) that is sponsored by EEA Grants through the Active Citizens fund [8].

In more detail, the program aims to:

- create a strategy that allows for public involvement in landscape management and implement it in Prespa Lakes and Messinia;
- promote this approach and others through a toolkit that will be geared toward NGOs, neighbourhood associations, and organizations involved in the preservation of the world's natural and cultural heritage;
- determine through a survey how community organizations and groups participate in laws that have an impact on the environment;
- discuss improving public participation procedures in decisions that affect the landscape with the appropriate authorities;
- develop a proactive landscape management strategy

There are four recognized levels of involvement.

1. **Awareness**: We wish to inform stakeholders about the program, its activities, and its outcomes.
2. **Opinion**: Stakeholders whose perspectives and opinions are sought as part of the planning process;
3. **Survey**: Stakeholders whose input we would like to receive during the planning process;
4. **Design**: We want stakeholders to participate in workshops that lead to the creation of shared landscape quality objectives.

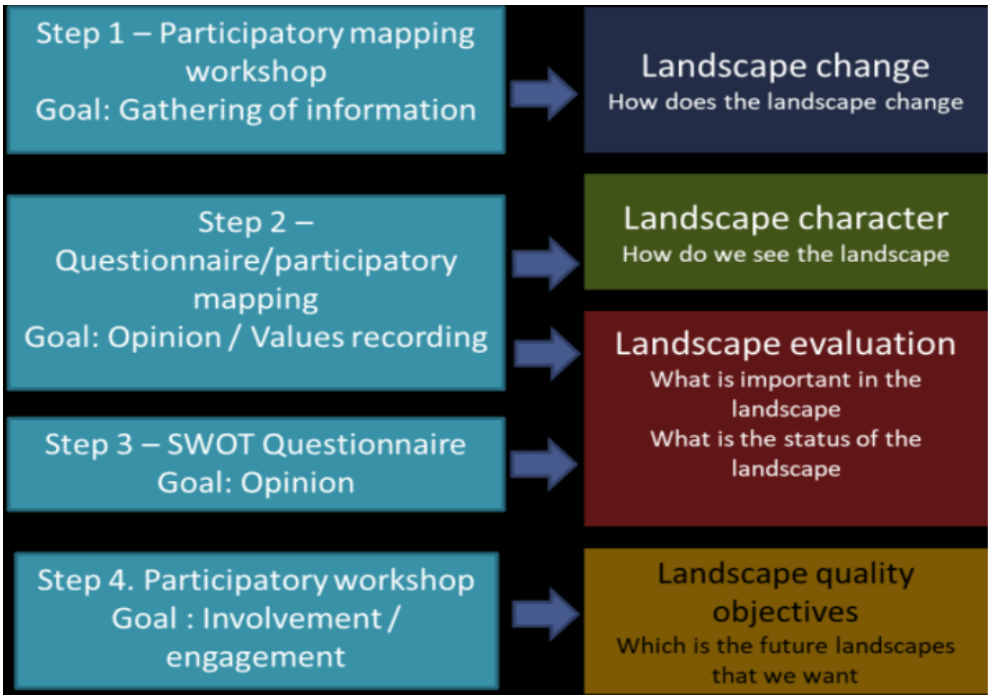


Figure: The steps the public participation strategy

Building a culture of negotiation, trust, and co-planning for the landscapes of the future that we collectively envision requires public participation in landscape planning.

Spain

Based on European Landscape Convention, procedures should be established for public participation, as well as the local and regional authorities and other stakeholders in the formulation and application of landscape policies

At the national level, how is climate change being addressed in terms of landscape policy?

Bulgaria

The geographical location of Bulgaria is characterized by a particular vulnerability to the negative impact of climate change. Thus, the country is sensitive to rising temperatures and extreme precipitation is likely to escalate the frequency of extreme weather events, such as storms, hailstorms, droughts, wildfires, landslides, and floods.

Bulgaria's policy on climate change is based on two essential aspects related, on one side, to the country's international commitments undertaken with the ratification of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol and, on the other side, to the newly adopted European legislation in this area.

Bulgaria's most recent strategic documents in the area of climate change are:

1) the "Long-term strategy for the mitigation of climate change until 2050 for the republic of Bulgaria" sets out a framework for climate change adaptation (CCA) actions and priority directions until 2030, identifying and confirming the need for CCA actions both economy-wide and at the sectoral level i.e.: Agriculture, Biodiversity and Ecosystems, Energy, Forests, Human Health, Transport, Tourism, Urban Environment and Water. The strategy gives specific actions regarding landscape management for climate change results in terms of the adaptation of forest ecosystems to climate change, reduction and/or optimization of emissions in the agricultural sector, decarbonization and circular economy challenges, and water usage.

2) the "The National Strategy and Action Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change of the Republic of Bulgaria" aims to serve as a reference document defining a framework for actions for adaptation to climate change (ACC) and priority areas until 2030, identifying and confirming the need of climate adaptation action both economy-wide and at the sectoral level, while also highlighting the consequences of inaction.

3) the "Third National Action Plan on Climate Change" 2013-2020 (NAPCC) which aims to outline the framework for action to combat climate change for the period 2013-2020 and to focus the country's efforts on actions leading to reduction of the negative impacts of climate change and implementation of the undertaken commitments. The plan includes specific measures to be implemented against climate change like management of degraded agricultural land regarding landscape in particular.

4) the "Climate change mitigation act" is the piece of national legislation addressing the implementation of the government policy on climate change mitigation, including afforestation, reforestation and land use change for the purpose of reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The act aims, through the undertaking of national measures and the introduction of European and international mechanisms, to guarantee the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions as a main element in the policy to limit climate change and to ensure the long-term planning of measures for adaptation to climate change.

Flanders (Belgium)

Greece

The natural landscape is our cultural heritage. Its degradation, therefore, from the effects of the climate crisis undermines the development of both the local society and the economy, but also our very cultural identity. For this reason, the protection of landscapes is today more than ever an imperative.

Recently, for example, the initiative of the untrodden mountains, the roadless areas with the shielding of six Greek mountains, was announced.

Greece is among the first countries in Europe, perhaps the first country in Europe, which has proceeded with such an initiative. Among them, Mount Hatzi, located in Trikala and Thessaly, is protected from any human intervention.

We protect our ecosystems and ensure the special characteristics of our natural landscape. Greece becomes the first country to draw up such a policy and create a special regime for important mountain masses, placing our mountains in a highly protected status [1].

Spain

The governmental Strategy for Spain 2050 mentions climate change and water retention (transformation of ecosystems) and landscape´s role, variation in production of goods in agriculture and food industry contributing in carbon neutrality, protection of biodiversity and regeneration and vertebration of the landscape. Also agriculture and forest landscape may serve as a tool for fire risk areas management. Finally, burnt zones should be managed towards fire and climate change resilient landscape.

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