

# Seville Declaration on the Integration of the Social Dimension in the Research and Management of Cultural Landscapes



## Introduction

On November 30th and December 1st, the *International Symposium Cultural Landscapes and Social Perceptions* was held in Seville, the final event of the project *Landscape and Society. Analysis of Social Perception in Cultural Landscapes (PAYSOC)\**, led by the Andalusian Institute of Historical Heritage in collaboration with the University of Seville, the European University of the Canary Islands, the Pablo de Olavide University and the University of Ferrara. This Symposium brought together specialists from Portugal, France, Italy and Spain to present the results of their research on theoretical and methodological aspects and practical experiences of integrating the social dimension in the research and management of cultural landscapes.

In general, this forum called for the integration of the social dimension in all aspects of research and management of cultural landscapes, both for their identification and characterization, as well as for the definition and application of landscape quality objectives. In this context, "social dimensions" are understood as those aspects that concern the interaction between society and landscapes, both in the past and in the present. They include perceptual, sensory and emotional qualities, social representations and the active participation of people in their research and management.

As a result, this Declaration is written with a particular focus on cultural landscapes, those recognized for their heritage values by the administrations responsible for managing cultural heritage, although its signatories understand that its considerations could be extended to all landscapes. It is also in line with the principles reflected in previous

agreements of international scope on this matter, among which the following stand out:

- a) *Recommendation No. R (95) on the integrated conservation of cultural landscape areas as part of landscape policies* (Council of Europe, 1995). In particular, the definition of these areas (Article 1), the defense of people's participation in landscape assessment and management (Article 4.4.viii), and the integration of different perceptions of landscape in educational programs (Article 9.2.c).
- b) *Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters* (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 1999). In particular, its consideration of the condition of cultural sites and buildings as part of environmental information, as they may be altered by the elements of the environment (Article 3c).
- c) *Council of Europe Landscape Convention* (Council of Europe, 2000). Especially because it emphasizes the importance of public perception in the definition of landscape (Article 1), the relevance of public participation in the formulation and implementation of landscape policies (Article 5c), and especially in the definition of landscape quality objectives (Article 6.2.D).
- d) *Faro Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society* (Council of Europe, 2005). In particular, for signifying society's right to cultural heritage (especially Article 4) and democratic participation in all aspects related to its knowledge and management (Article 12).
- e) *Xi'an Declaration on the Conservation of the Setting of Heritage Structures, Sites and Areas* (ICOMOS, 2005), which considers

that they derive their significance and distinctiveness from the perception of their social, spiritual, historical, artistic, aesthetic, natural, scientific or other cultural values (Article 2).

- f) *Ibero-American Cultural Charter* (OEI, 2006), based on principles such as the consideration of citizen participation as an essential aspect for the development of cultures.
- g) *Resolution of the European Parliament of 8 September 2015 on an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe* (European Parliament, 2015), which supports the development of new participatory governance models for its management (Articles 14 to 21).
- h) *Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)1 of the Council of Ministers to Member States on the European Cultural Heritage Strategy for the 21st Century* (Council of Europe, 2017), which devotes Section VI.I. to the relationship between heritage and society and participatory governance for the transmission of democratic values and good management.
- i) *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (UNESCO), which promotes the participation of local communities and other stakeholders in the preparation of the Tentative List (Article 64), management plans (Article 111a), sustainable use of properties (Article 119), preparation of nominations (Article 123), objectives to promote support for the Convention (2011d), and educational activities (Article 220). It also recommends the integration of human perception, association of ideas and visual connectivity into management plans that consider an environment beyond the buffer zone of inscribed properties (Article 112).

Based on these principles, the need for their implementation and the scientific and technical background of the signatories, it is agreed to submit the following recommendations to the Council of Europe, the World Heritage Center and ICOMOS.

### **1. To count the position of all stakeholders in the research and management of cultural landscapes**

It is necessary to adequately identify all major and minor stakeholders in the implementation of research and management projects in cultural landscapes. It is also necessary to identify their capacity to influence and to involve them in all processes. The starting point for this task should be a mapping of stakeholders that reflects their social structure, relationships and interests.

### **2. Understanding social perceptions and representations of cultural landscapes**

The Council of Europe's *Landscape Convention* makes knowledge of social perceptions and representations of cultural landscapes an imperative. The tools for obtaining such knowledge are varied and must be based on the application of both quantitative and qualitative techniques by specialized technical personnel. The process should always take into account the different discursive positions and not ignore the points of confluence or disagreement between agents. Finally, perceptions include local and foreign, collective and individual, past and present, emotional and sensory, and are represented in the arts and other media such as literature, tourist advertising, social networks, or institutional and academic publications.

### **3. To ensure research on the social dimension of landscape**

Innovative research on the social dimension of cultural landscapes strengthens the methods and techniques for their analysis and application. Interdisciplinary, transnational and public scientific research will be encouraged, as well as scientific-technical events to promote the exchange of ideas and experiences.

### **4. To integrate social perceptions and representations into landscape standards and strategies**

Each scale of political action (international, national, regional or local) and sectoral scope (culture, environment, tourism, urban and regional planning, agriculture, industry and energy) should develop standards and strategies for the cultural landscape. They should take into account the diversity of viewpoints, i.e. of social perceptions and representations of landscapes, as well as the range of proposals associated with each of them.

### **5. Ensure the inclusion of the social dimension in territorial policies**

All policies related to spatial planning, agriculture, infrastructure, urban planning, energy, tourism, environment and natural and cultural heritage, with responsibilities in the management of cultural landscapes, must include their social dimension in order to improve their protection, management and planning through concerted actions.

This is the only way to lay the foundations for real and effective governance of cultural landscapes.

## **6. Raise awareness of the positive impact of landscapes on the quality of life and the strengthening of local cultures**

Effective management requires that stakeholders - local and visiting populations, associations, educational institutions, local elected officials, professionals and civil society in general - have the necessary skills both to act as liaisons between the various operations to collect information on social perceptions and representations of cultural landscapes, and to define landscape quality objectives and participate in their implementation and monitoring.

## **7. Awareness raising, training and education to preserve cultural landscapes and promote a culture of care**

Communication plans and training and education programs should include content related to the tangible and intangible heritage values of cultural landscapes in order to promote respect for them. They should be aimed at both local people and managers who carry out economic activities in them, especially those related to tourism and other leisure activities.

## **8. Promote effective social participation**

Social participation has become an indispensable principle for any action to preserve or improve the quality of landscapes. Unlike other cultural assets, cultural landscapes change and it is necessary to manage their changes by developing the necessary tools. Participatory processes can be applied to the identification and characterization of cultural landscapes, to the study of social perceptions and representations, and to the definition and monitoring of landscape quality objectives. These processes should always take into account the contingent socio-economic characteristics and structures.

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