

## **Conclusions and recommendations from the discussion**

### **Alternatives for the transposition of the requirements of the European Landscape Convention in the Bulgarian legislation**

#### **Summary**

The aim of the discussion was to establish a concept for the approach to transpose the European Landscape Convention in the Bulgarian legislation. The workshop participants gathered around the common opinion that landscapes must be identified, protected and managed in a sustainable way. It was emphasized that the large non-fragmented areas still existing in the Republic of Bulgaria are a major advantage for the landscape protection and management in the country. In that relation the participants expressed their concern about the increasing rate of landscape fragmentation in the last decades. In relation to “wild nature” protection this process inevitably leads to the urgent necessity to establish a national ecological network with its corridors and stepping stones. Another major fact noted in the course of the discussion was that landscapes link ecosystem ecology with human ecology. In that context, landscape protection is not aimed only at “wilderness” protection but should also include protection of agricultural lands, as well as objects of the cultural and historical heritage of Bulgaria. It was also recommended that all institutions (especially Ministries) dealing with landscapes should be included in the development and the subsequent implementation of the strategy.

The discussion on the possible approaches to transpose the European Landscape Convention in the Bulgarian legislation focused on the following two alternatives:

- 1) Development of a special act on the landscape protection;
- 2) Integration of the requirements of the convention in the existing national legislation.

It was concluded that the development of new or corrections of existing pieces of legislation would be premature given the existing country situation. The workshop participants highly recommended to the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria, represented by the Ministry of Environment and Water as the co-organizer of the event, to develop a national landscapes strategy as an emergency measure. Along with the landscapes protection and management, the main goal of the strategy will be to review the existing national legislation with respect to the protection and management of landscapes and to identify any possible shortcomings. The concrete alternative to transpose the European Landscape Convention will be chosen based on the results and recommendations from the review of the national legislation.