

Recommendations
from the thematic meeting of experts
on the agro-pastoral cultural landscapes in the Mediterranean

20th, 21st, 22nd September 2007, Meyrueis, Lozère, France

Themes:

- (Pastoralism)
- (Mediterranean agro-pastoralism)

Recommendations:

- (Granting of Heritage status/'*Patrimonialisation*' and common project)
- (Recommendations specific to World Heritage)
- (Meeting follow ups)

The thematic meeting of experts on the Mediterranean agro-pastoral cultural landscapes was attended by 44 participants, representing 9 countries of the Mediterranean basin, as well as UNESCO, ICOMOS, IUCN, EFNCP (refer item 17), the French state and regional, local and departmental authorities. The list of participants and the meeting programme are in the appendix.

These recommendations are addressed to UNESCO, to the World Heritage Committee, the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies (ICOMOS and IUCN) and the States Parties that wish to submit agro-pastoral cultural landscapes for inclusion onto the World Heritage list or already possess such inscription, and more generally to all concerned by the management of such sites.

CONSIDERING:

(Pastoralism)

- 1 **(Definition)** Pastoralism is defined as a system of cattle breeding that uses for the most part, spontaneous vegetation resources for pasture, mostly in an extensive fashion, either on the farm site itself or in the context of transhumance or nomadism.
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- 3 **(Characteristics)** The pastoral system, characterised by interactions between a society and cattle breeding activities in natural environments:
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5 - represents, in today's world, one of the major geo-cultural ensembles, at the same title as other large groups such as agricultural, industrial, commercial, religious, artistic (etc.) groups ;
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8 - exists within a framework of a dynamic interaction between man and nature, that proved through long periods of time to be an efficient model of management both in terms of spatial heterogeneity and natural risks, and that produced not only sustainable ecosystems that contributed to the global biodiversity, social economical and local development but also cultural landscapes of notable qualities.

9 - displays a large variety of means of highlighting and developing natural and anthropozoogenic environments (nomadism, transhumance, agro-pastoralism, agro-forestry, sedentary farming...), bred species (bovine, ovine, caprine, equidae, camelidae...) and regional ensembles (the Central Asian and African steppes, the Saharan and Arabic deserts, the Mediterranean basin, the alpine meadows, the Andean altiplano, the Argentinian pampas, the Great Plains of North America, Scottish heathland, etc.);

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11 - is threatened at a world level of radical transformation or abandon due to environmental, climatic, physical, economical, social or political changes that affect its surroundings and societies.

For those reasons, following considerations from the World Heritage Committee in its 28th session (Suzhou, 2004, from the *gap analysis* prepared by ICOMOS and IUCN, and the 1992-2002 cultural landscapes categories evaluation published in 2003), they considered that the pastoralism landscapes have their place in the World Heritage cultural landscapes category and that the World Heritage list does not do them enough justice.

(Mediterranean agro-pastoralism)

3 **(Definition)** Agro-pastoralism constitutes one of these large ensemble of pastoral systems. It is defined within the following contexts:

- Influence of the Mediterranean climate (dry to very dry summer, mild to cold winter);
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- relief suitable for medium and sometimes high mountains, hence allowing for a large variety of natural habitats depending on substratum, altitude, sun exposure and vegetation, and that gives adequate conditions for transhumance;
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- soils of generally poor productivity;
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- cattle breeding of generally ovine type, often associated with caprine, and locally bovine, equidae or camelidae; some herds retained local domestic breeds, an outcome of the shepherds sharing their knowledge of the land and in turn contributing to their sense of belonging and identity;
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- spread across 3 continents, it is one of richest regions in terms of biodiversity and yet highly anthropized;
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- - Several million years of interactions combined within this ensemble, with, for consequence a myriad of arable systems and some zones more open than others;
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 - a regional ensemble that saw the birth of the three major monotheist religions and for which the shepherd and its herd hold a strong symbolic place.
- Within this context, the Mediterranean agro-pastoral societies have put in place tailored and complex systems, bringing together pastoralism, farming and forestry, intensive and extensive farming types (mostly mixed and to varying degrees in space and times), sedentary, nomadic and transhumant life ways.
- 4 (**Associated values**) The Mediterranean agro-pastoral landscapes, existing in often spectacular settings so close to the mountains, possess highly valuable patterns in terms of heritage, such as the ecosystems and traces of the human activities that created them: paths, troughs, hand-built habitats, terraces, dry-stone walls, hydraulic works, etc. As for the other pastoral cultural landscapes in the world, these also hold associative or intangible values that cannot be dissociated from their tangible qualities. Mediterranean agro-pastoral societies possess knowledges, 'know-hows', traditions and rituals of great cultural wealth. Their territories have often served as refuge to ethnic or religious minorities and often hold on their soils sacred sites of high symbolic value. All these values, tangible and intangible, are also characterised by a persistent tenacity from the past to nowadays.
 - 5 (**Regional distinctivenesses**) Aside from their common characteristics, the Mediterranean agro-pastoral landscapes display a range of diversities notably amongst their regional families: North bank of Mediterranean, the Balkans, the Middle East, the Maghreb. Conditions within these zones can vary considerably: quality of life, markets, demographics (growth or decline), political, religious or economical history whether ancient or recent, relationships between communities, urban or infrastructural pressures, evolution of pastured soils (closure, excessive grazing), natural risks (fire, flood, erosion, desertification), agricultural, economical and environmental politics, social demand (nature and cultural tourism, social identities linked to landscapes characteristics, etc.).

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PARTICIPANTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

(Granting of Heritage status/'Patrimonialisation' and common project)

6 **(Vision)** It is necessary to take into consideration the fact that the various viewpoints on the landscapes herein considered, are the result upon a system in a given space. These viewpoints can be those of: the agro-pastoral societies that shape them, the other inhabitants, the authorities that manage them, those who care for their preservation, visitors or those who discover them from a distance by varying means of communication. Because these viewpoints can be antagonistic, the recognition and management process imply a negotiation in order to firstly attain a common vision at a local governance level.

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8 **(Project)** The central participation of the local stakeholders to the definition and management of their cultural landscapes is not only a question of democracy, but also an essential component of the long-term efficiency of their preservation and management. Recognition of an agro-pastoral territory as cultural landscape and its management must be a common project, established by the local actors (breeders, farmers, hunters, authorities, governmental decision-makers, heritage and nature protectors, research experts...) in consultation with regional and national authorities, and shared by the visitors and the persons concerned by the protection of cultural and natural heritage.

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10 **(Evolution and resilience)** To enable forward development, activities of the agro-pastoral systems and their landscapes must find a medium way between museumification for tourism sake and total amnesia, in order to both preserve their heritage values and keeping themselves economical viable in a modern context. These agro-pastoral systems actually demonstrate qualities of flexibility, adaptability to local and world movements and market changes, and even resilience (their ability to regenerate themselves after a down period).

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12 **(Necessity of supportive public politics)** The agro-pastoral systems (societies, development methods, cultures and landscapes), remain very fragile in the current context, particularly in the context of climate change and economic globalization. For this reason they require support from the State politics that would reflect the recognition of their cultural and natural heritage value (tangible and intangible) and the value that society as a whole, attributes to them.

(Recommendations specific to World Heritage)

10 **(Inscriptions objectives)** Inscription of certain Mediterranean agro-pastoral sites on the World Heritage list must not lead to their isolation by neglecting sites less emblematic, but must contribute to improve general awareness to these landscapes and towards the societies that create them, in order to benefit the ensemble.

11 (**Choice of representative sites**) The sites brought forward to represent the Mediterranean agro-pastoralism on the World Heritage list must reflect the diversity, in particular the regional diversity of the systems and landscapes that characterise them, while acting as the most eminent of those systems and landscapes and as models of sustainable management.

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13 (**Serial properties**) If several sites, whether or not of the same country, appeared to be linked, in particular through their belonging to the same regional ensemble or because they are complementary, these sites will be able to be submitted together as serial properties. This does not prevent an earlier inscription of one of the series' sites, should its application be ready for submission and should this site possess, by itself, an outstanding universal value.

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15 (**Category**) The territories shaped by the Mediterranean agro-pastoralism come essentially under the category of living evolving cultural landscapes, but can equally belong to other categories, as those of cultural itineraries (particularly where the transhumance paths are well defined) and those of mixed properties (if they display criteria of natural value).

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17 (**Delimitation**) The delimitation of the Mediterranean agro-pastoral cultural landscapes, candidate to the World Heritage nomination, will have to take into consideration the complexity, scope and mobility of the systems considered, thus particularly in order to satisfy the integrity criteria as defined in item 88 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* that requires to “*assess the extent to which the property: (a) includes all elements necessary to express its outstanding universal value; (b) is of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes which convey the property's significance (...)*”.

In particular, because transhumance phenomenon links regions that can be far apart geographically, the applications will have to examine the opportunity to bring them together or not into a one and same candidacy, and/or consider an inscription under the « heritage routes » (or « cultural itineraries ») title.

15 (**Evaluation of the agro-pastoral cultural landscapes**) Evaluation of these cultural landscapes must be done by ICOMOS and IUCN jointly, analysing the proposed property as a heritage entity and not as an addition of natural and cultural values. The complexity of the relationships between agro-pastoral activities and natural resources, the role of biodiversity on the agro-pastoral potentialities, the composition of natural heritage values directly linked to those activities are inseparable for an assessment measuring the outstanding universal value of a proposed landscape as a World Heritage property.

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(Meeting follow-ups)

- 16 (**Acts and thematic study**) The participants would like for the presentations' summary and the case studies presented at the meeting to be published, together with eventually case studies of those countries that could not be represented at the time.

In time, this publication could lead to a more general thematic study (for example on world pastoralism), in the context of the *Global Strategy for a balanced, representative and credible World Heritage List*. In the meantime, this first publication and its conclusions could already give the World Heritage Committee the necessary elements for assessing the Mediterranean agro-pastoral landscapes inscription applications that it could receive.

- 17 (**Other programmes**) Cooperation is encouraged between institutions, networks and international programmes involved on the themes relating to pastoralism. In particular:

- UNESCO, its relevant programmes (World Heritage, Man and Biosphere) and its Advisory Bodies (IUCN, ICOMOS, ICCROM),
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- the European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism (EFNCP),
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- the *World Initiative for Sustainable Pastoralism* (WISP) launched by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and coordinated by IUCN,
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- FAO's programme *Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems* (GIAHS),
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- the European Convention's *The European landscape Convention* ,
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- the European networks Interreg III c *Pastomed 1* and Interreg IV *Pastomed 2*,
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- The *United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification* (UNCCD),
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- The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)...
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- 18 (**Network**) The participants wish to continue and widen the works under way with a network assembling professionals and researchers; calling on partners from countries outside the Mediterranean region and completing the panel of related disciplines. With a view to promote and preserve the cultures, the *know-hows* and the landscapes of pastoralism in the Mediterranean area.

A working group, lead by Tahar Berchiche, will outline the network's purpose and working terms, based on the World Heritage Centre's recommendations and together with existing networks related to pastoralism.

The participants provide here a list of possible projects for the network:

Communication:

- Find a common language between stakeholders (researchers, farmers, managers and administrations...) and the different regions; to build up a corpus of common definitions of concepts and purposes;
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- Create a website.

Improved knowledge and understanding:

- Assemble a collection of printed resources (scientific publications, legal texts);
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- Provide a general diagnostic on the scale of the Mediterranean basin, on the characteristics, values, threats, assets and management of the territories concerned; create a report on problematic and methodology, presented to all the participants and partners likely to join the network;
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- Identify the sites that could represent, alone or in series, the Mediterranean agro-pastoralism on the World Heritage list; define and instigate one or several comparative studies; set-up periodic evaluative and monitoring systems and suggest decision-making tools, all at the service of the local stakeholders and government's decision-makers.

Acting towards preservation:

- Implement exemplary aid operations to regions in difficulties or to dynamic projects; involve training establishments (universities, schools...); create research and development experimental groups; participate to educative programmes, increase awareness of the larger public;
- Seek political and financial supports necessary for the operating of the network.

It is agreed that the acts of this meeting be published.