

Dear participants of the conference,

I address to you on behalf of the management of the Ministry of Environment and welcome starting the Baltic landscape forum as a relevant event both for our country and the whole Baltic region as well.

The objective of the conference is to encourage the dialogue and cooperation of the national, regional and municipal management bodies, communities, non-governmental organizations, general public and deliberate citizens in the implementation of provisions of the European Landscape Convention.

This forum is a welcome for its importance in updating and ensuring participation of general public's representatives in the process of the landscape and territory planning. Deliberate society should be acknowledged with and influence the governmental policy in the processes of landscape protection, planning and formation.

In order to implement the European Landscape Convention and the national legislation in the field of landscape, a coherent co-ordination and co-operation of activities of the state, municipal, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions and representatives of the general public is necessary.

As you can see from the program of the forum, you shall study and discuss not only social, economic, ecological, cultural but also methodological and practical issues of landscape protection and formation. There will be presented the country's landscape plan of the national level our institution is responsible for development of, and every effort is made to make this plan a new quality of territorial planning document, which shall incorporate the Lithuanian landscape development and expanding strategy for the next decennaries. It should be noted that in these latter years in order to implement regulations of the Lithuanian landscape policy, other important landscape protection and management optimization projects have been prepared and are being finalized under use of the European Union structural support. These are projects of protection and planning of the Lithuanian seaside as the most valuable recreational resource of our country: it is the recreation plan of coastline continental beaches, methodological guidelines for development of the graphic - visual system of the coastline, amendments to the special plan of the coastline limits, study on protection and use of the coast of the Curonian lagoon. The methodological issues of green space management and planning didn't remain unaddressed as well- two methodologies were developed. The landscape protection and management guidelines for state roads and railways which are currently in development attracted an exceptional attention of the society and interested institutions. It should be noted that landscape popularization and educational activity is very important as well- a number of publications about our country's landscape diversity, topical contests- surveys, exhibitions and events was released.

The Ministry of Environment as one of the key institutions of our country responsible for implementation of the European Landscape Convention and the national landscape policy, understands the importance and value of the forum and undertakes to listen to and to provide full support to decision and recommendations of the forum.

We wish you good work and good luck.

Gintautas Gruodis  
Head of Landscape Division  
Protected areas and landscape department  
Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania