

SHIFTING APPROACHES IN LANDSCAPE PROTECTION: THE IMPLICATION OF NATURA 2000 NETWORK AND THE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION FOR LANDSCAPE PLANNING IN ESTONIA

Antti Roose¹, Kalev Sepp², Ain Vellak³, Madli Linder¹, Tambet Kikas⁴, Tuuli Veersalu⁵

¹University of Tartu, ²Estonian University of Life Sciences, ³Environmental Board, ⁴GallusGeo OÜ, ⁵Estonian regional and local development agency Pärnu Institute

The European Landscape Convention (ELC) seeks to further strengthen the protection, management and planning of Europe's landscapes. The implementation of pan-European Natura 2000 network intends preserving not just species, but also habitats and the whole environment. The planning and implementation of management activities for both could be done simultaneously, targeting objectives of landscape as well habitat protection.

Model landscapes in Vooremaa, Karula national parks and Agusalu nature reserve etc were assessed by merits of implementation of ELC and Natura 2000. Test areas represent different landscape types, habitats and local circumstances. Mapping exercise seeking overlapping and frictions between target layers was based on Natura 2000 layers, nature reserve data, basic map, soil map, landscape units, green network layers and general plans.

As a rule, the borders of nature reserve follow landscape features, in particular in case of linear objects. In some cases, the lineation interrupts landscape units despite similar habitats. The fuzzy borders exist in case of non-linear reserve objects. Also, confronting lineation of landscape and habitat protection areas appears compared to green network and general plans. Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment are key mechanisms which require the incorporation of clear landscape and habitat objectives.

Complex processes in landscapes are not yet systematically linked to habitats due to different spatial, operational and methodological bases. Approaches of landscape management need to be covered by management plans of protection areas in a more comprehensive way. Also, spatial scale and typologies of landscapes and habitats should be harmonized for setting the highest standards in landscape planning and management.