AIAPP National Association

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Pecha Kucha Presentation
IFLA Europe General Assembly
14/16 October 2016 Belgium

RETHINKING OF URBAN LANDSCAPES

Today's territories of many European Countries are negatively marked by various dynamics transformations: growth of urban areas, undefined extensions of the suburbs lacking any identity, degrading effects of recent "overbuilding" and *urban sprawl*, uncontrolled growth in agricultural lands of infrastructures, industrial building and energy production structures and a progressive fragmentation of natural reserves.

The Italian territory characterized by 8.000 kilometers of coasts is transformed by constant touristic settlements that <u>have </u>often deteriorated the ecological system, cancelled the environmental connection land-sea and changed the original architectural character of old coastal *small towns.*

In rethinking urban landscape it is necessary to explore new environmental politics for defend reconstruct   a connection of the bio-cultural systems.

It is necessary to guide and influence the dynamics of transformation, develop preventive actions and the necessary measures to contain conflicting uses of fragile territories in order to mitigate the negative effects of transformations, the risks of catastrophic events and other consequences of the climate changes.

To improve the dynamics of transformation, to promote more sustainable cities and harmonious territory development, we need to design and plan solutions based on an extension of attention to the *entire territorial dimension* and *systemic vision* grounded on an interdisciplinary and holistic interpretation on territorial and environmental knowledge and analysis.

These considerations find a significant acknowledgment in the innovations contained in the text of the ELC of 2000, entirely dedicated to the landscape: in this document, the *"landscape dimension"* is extended to the whole territory, recognizing

the landscape, as the context of life of the populations, the expression of the diversity of their cultural and natural heritage and the foundation of their identity.

The ELC principles have extended the *landscape dimension* to all territories and in all the land politics of the European States. The main objectives are to promote the quality of people's living contexts, to limit the risks, the critical issues and threats of the territory, to find opportunities for a sustainable development of transformations also for the future generations.

This new concept of the *landscape dimension* of the territory can be the path to enhance the assets (environmental, of settlements, socio-cultural, landscape..) that are the foundation of the identity of each site. Focusing on reconnecting to each other, in a new "*science of the territory*", fragmented knowledge's, able to tackle the problems related to socio-economic and environmental degradation; focusing on targeting and deepening scientific knowledge grounded on hydro geological protection, ecological restoration, urban and landscape quality, integrated economies.

The *systemic vision* takes into careful consideration the numerous issues related to the environmental system, it's related to the study of dynamic interactions between the different natural and cultural value systems that have characterized the urban environment and the landscape in historical territories; It requires trans and holistic interpretations, avoiding sectoral reductive readings.

The consequences of a continuous coastal urbanisation of Viareggio town along the North Tyrrhenian coast. An example of entire transformation of fragile littoral environments and of alteration of the cultural identities of coastal landscape by touristic development during the last century. (Ph. R. Merlo, Genova)

Sestri Levante village along the Ligurian coast is a significant example of touristic development in which the attention to the coastal geomorphological features and to the conservation of original landscape characters . (Ph. R. Merlo, Genova).