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Evaluation of the changes of landscape types of Slovakia

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In the last period landscape protection, its representative types more and more comes to the limelight. In October 2000 the European Landscape Convention - also known as the Florence Convention was adopted. The aims of this Convention are to promote landscape protection, management and planning, and to organise European co-operation on landscape issues. Contracting states ought to analyse the landscape types on the whole area of their countries, to analyse their features, record their changes, specify motive power and pressure forming them and assess selected types with respect to special values attributed by engaged participants and inhabitants. Knowledge and identification of single landscape types enable the intensification of care of diversity of single landscape types and landscape biodiversity. It is an unavoidable condition in the strategic planning process and effective protection of regionally special landscape.

Slovakia signed ELC in 2005 and became an active participant in its implementation. The Institute of the Landscape Ecology of Slovak Academy of Sciences elaborated methodology for specification and evaluation of the representative landscape types of Slovakia (RLTS).

RLTS are defined as homogeneous units considering the landscape character, functions and current land-use. GIS (Geographical Information Systems) tool was used to create RLTS, in particular by overlaying of abiotic landscape structure (type of relief, quaternary deposits, climatic regions, and soil types) and land-cover map (CORINE Land Cover 2006 - CLC) at national scale. This process yielded to a patched map of homogeneous areas, which were further interpreted, generalized, and regionalized to a final map of RLTS.

Landscape types of Slovakia were defined by the synthesis of the mentioned maps. Totally there were identified 126 basic landscape types. Each landscape type represents unique combination of land-use in different abiotic conditions and gives the unique environment for nature development in the second stage typing rare and unique landscape types of Slovakia have been marked

Following, all RLTS were evaluated from the point of view nature protection and recent degradation and threats. In the meantime main changes of RLES were identified, taken into account also key driving forces of landscape changes and consequent pressures on the landscape. The final step included preparation of management proposal with aim to maintain all representative landscape types and to secure their sustainable development and protection.