NATURE AND LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION SYSTEMS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC AND UKRAINE – A METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

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A comparative study has been initiated dealing in nature and landscape conservation systems in two countries, the Czech Republic and Ukraine. The goal is to provide systematic information for researchers, government and administration employees, NGO´s, business firms, students, as well as other interested persons. The study reacts to the fact that there is little knowledge of the Ukrainian nature and landscape conservation system in the Czech Republic, as well as little knowledge of the Czech system in Ukraine.

The study aims to compare the official conditions of nature and landscape conservation in the two countries. It also attempts to provide some elementary evaluation of success or failure of nature and landscape conservation systems. The sources of input information and data are the internet, statistical documents, and published materials. I some cases, e-mails, phone calls or other inquiries to government officials, scientists, environmental activist or other persons are to complete the information.

A qualititative methodology has been designed in order to collect the relevant information.   Some quanititative data are being collected as well, however the methodology is mainly qualitative and most of the input and output will be in a narrative form. The core of the methodology is a series of analytical questions to which answers are sought for each of the countries. Individual questions are arranged into groups of common characteristics. Each individual question is substantiated in writing, as well as each group of questions.

The analytical query, which presents the largest part of the work, will be followed by a synthetical part. The synthethis will summarize the findings, and serve as a basis for offering suggestions. Recommendations for systems´ improvement will be provided. These suggestions will be directed at government officials, however also at other parties (NGO´s, scientists, educational personel, etc.).

The system of nature and landscape conservation is not understood as the government administrative structure only. The study does not limit itself to inquiry into state nature and landscape conservation institutions. System is understood as a set of entities comprising a whole where each component interacts with or is related to at least one other component and they all serve a common objective.

Therefore, in our case, we consider also officially registered NGO´s and unofficial environmental movements. The factors outside of the system (lobbies, various government ministries, political parties and influencial individuals, business associations and individual influential companies) need to be considered as well, even though they are sometimes difficult to map (at least in a scientific manner). The state of education, as related to sustainability issues and nature conservation, needs also to be analyzed, as well as the ambiguous role of the media.

Some inquiry into protected values (organisms and ecosystems, characteristic landscapes) has to be carried out initially. However, the inquiry has predominantly the point of view of social disciplines (using approaches of economics, sociology, political science, etc.), not natural sciencies. The government organisational structures for nature and landscape conservation are to be inquired and compared. The existing environmental law and its development is to be researched, as well as matters of the actual law enforcement. The economic instruments supporting nature protection are to be described.

Attention needs to be given also to the activities of non-government organisations, and to the relevance of scientific research for practical nature conservation. Ideally, the study will collect also some data that could be fed into chosen indicators of success or failure of the government policies. The study will not attempt to get deep into specific topis. It should provide a general overview, an initial description and elementary evaluation, that could serve as a base for a more specific research in the future.