IGU-UGI 2019 Thematic Conference

Transformation of Traditional Cultural Landscapes
Koper, Slovenia  
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TRANSFORMATION OF TRADITIONAL CULTURAL LANDSCAPES
Cultural landscapes are multifunctional landscapes which reflect a complex correlation between natural, historical, political, and cultural factors. Traditional cultural landscapes are shaped by traditional land management practices. The loss of these management practices leads to ecosystem change, which successively is likely to lead to the loss of important biological or cultural values. The extent of integration between environmental (ecological) and socio-economic functions of the landscape depends on the patterns and intensities of land use. Land use is a basic human activity that shapes socio-economic development and modifies structures and processes in the environment. Traditional land use is disappearing due to the intensification of agricultural production on the one hand and the retreat of agriculture from unfavourable areas on the other hand. Sustainable development and the conservation of biodiversity and landscape diversity depend on the continuation of human intervention. In this way the traditional and highly valued landscapes can be maintained whilst also assisting economic and social sustainable development. Unsuitable management practices could be the cause of increased soil erosion and natural disasters. Appropriate policies should be applied to decrease such negative impacts on cultural landscapes. The role of landscape parks, as areas with high conservation value and high development appeal, is also important. They can be promoted as specific development areas while contributing to the maintenance of the cultural landscapes and biodiversity. The study of the links between landscape features and regional development is relevant for the development of policies related to land use and regional development, such as agricultural policies, regional policies and spatial planning policies. Cultural interpretation and significance of landscape can be also of controversial and object of disputes under circumstances of conflicts and political struggles. They can turn out in 'urbicide' like it was in the Balkans or 'archeocide' like in Syria to cancel tracks of cultural elements as it happens in the Mediterranean Basin in recent years. Thus issues of fair perception and valorisation of cultural heritage can be of special significance for geographical studies. Due to the location of the conference part of the sessions will be devoted to the Mediterranean cultural landscapes.