

To the Members of UNISCAPE

27 June 2021

Esteemed UNISCAPE members,

Now that our future is clearer after this latest period of living under COVID 19 conditions, it is an honour to candidate myself for the challenge of being President of UNISCAPE for the period 2021-2025.

The organizational difficulties and adversities related to the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the ELC, celebrated in person and “online” in Florence in October 2020, have allowed me to critically analyse, synthesize and endorse the action plan presented in the general assembly in 2016 and have also contributed to deep reflection on how to address a new period as President of UNISCAPE.

It is not easy to take on the commitment of disclosing and divulging the new challenges and future perspectives that Landscape in Europe will need to engage with in the coming years from a critical position; the opportunity of the Congress celebrated in Florence, “Cultivating the Continuity of European Landscapes”, that we were fortunate to hold in the “*Salone dei Cinquecento del Palazzo della Signoria*” of Florence with the participation of the executive secretariat of the ELC and national, regional and local authorities on 17 October 2020 in the presence of the public and UNISCAPE members, was, on the one hand, the setting for the culmination of the UNISCAPE Action Plan drawn up in 2016 and, on the other, a space for reflection where new topics, objectives and strategies for the future were discerned.

Precisely due to the intensity and the intriguing challenges addressed, I intend to continue clarifying and specifying the conclusions noted in the congress from different perspectives, angles and disciplines throughout 2021, and to this end, if you bestow your trust in me, confirm the commitment to take on the preparation of the congress in October 2021 in Florence, with all the contents and events as established and renewed energy, to prepare the New Challenges of UNISCAPE regarding landscape.

At this crossroads, it is imperative to insist on the role, responsibility and contents of Projects and Project Culture in the process of constructing European Landscape, a critical point that is still dormant today. For this reason, it is necessary to take into account the specificities of each territory and its particular characteristics when qualifying it while imparting a new pro-active impulse, coherently associated with the contemporary condition of landscape being both local and global, in order to conserve, protect, restore, and renovate it as well as articulately complement and implement its planning and management. Moreover, this entails the capacity and qualifications to insist on the necessary governance to carry it out and thus the fundamental necessity of reformulating and specifying the role of projects in constructing Landscape, currently diluted among the objectives of sustainable development and the paradigmatic actions regarding climate change.

I think you will agree with me in diagnosing that the current state of “Project” processes in the construction of European Landscape is very nebulous and, at the very least, contradictory in many of the sectorial analyses of the various government departments and in the contents of university disciplines; here lies work that needs to be undertaken that we hope to start in October through the contents programmed for this event. I also hope we agree in recognizing that the interventions on Landscape are also specified in reports of great strategic potential to generate vital resources for the

country (territories), in addition to clearly expressed considerations for the community in relation to the beneficial action that this sector can develop in the workplace, to its social and economic utility as well as its capacity to evoke an idea of “civitas”, which is the basis for our concept of democracy, ever more sacred now in this tragic pandemic – post-pandemic moment.

Since the announcement of the “Of and In” Landscape Project, it is impossible to separate citizens from the surroundings in which they live, from their habitat and from what they perceive and desire. Since it gives meaning and significance to their universe, the project itself is a major agent of environmental change and the culture of the basic mechanism of adaptation. This is the contemporary dimension of Landscape and its importance in the renewal of the value of patrimony, both natural and cultural.

From this perspective, you can understand why I accentuate the necessity to view the near future for UNISCAPE and landscape in Europe as a space and time for action, starting from the trust, commitment and participation of everyone as it is imperative to talk with well thought-out ideas, calm hearts, clear minds and the instruments to carry them out. I hope to be able to fulfil this difficult but stimulating responsibility and offer the presidency of UNISCAPE as a space for alignment and action.

Permit me to end my candidature for the presidency of UNISCAPE by referring to the objective of reinforcing the organizational structure of the network so that it is able to respond to current and future demands and commitments.

The necessary revision and continuous updating of our network allows us to acknowledge our differences and divergences, both internal and external, and address political and cultural discussions from a critical position, and thus reflexive and imaginative, permanently questioning the Council of Europe CDCPP positions as well as the directives on Landscape of the states and administrations that make up the EC and CoE.

Some aspects and contents which merit attention, relative to the NETWORK, can be summarized as follows:

- Practically since the creation of the Network, there have been problems deriving from the capacity of member universities to manage administrative staff and UNISCAPE staff. This problem re-presents every year and negatively affects carry-out time and communication and has repercussions on the correct application of the statutes both economically and organisationally. There are various explanations and reasons but there is a structural aspect that clearly determines this situation, as shown by the enquiry carried out last year. It can be summarized as the dysfunction that supposes that the representatives of the universities report to their departments while formalisation falls to the rector’s office and the general administration that reports to it. We propose to resolve the situation by acknowledging the reality of current functioning and encourage more flexibility in member representation as is already envisaged in the the current statutes. This will reinforce and simplify the new enrolment of members with positive effects on the desire to have a wide and well-structured network capable of sharing management between members and facilitating communication.
- This year, 2021, we will renew the President, Vice-Presidents, and the Executive Board members, and in turn the Direction of the network. Precisely for this reason, right from my candidature, I’m setting out a series of proposals and suggestions to reinforce the network:
  - a. Propose the Vice-presidents as coordinators of their respective thematic areas, specifically of Education/Training (Seminaires-MASTER) and of Research-Scientific Competences ( Research Group),

- b. Encourage more participation and coverage between EB members and UNISCAPE members (the true essential heart of UNISCAPE) by offering a network of disciplines of each university that actively participates in academic university events and research projects and establishes new contacts in the network “between and with” other universities. The need to offer a permanent map of the disciplines of each university participating in UNISCAPE and the willingness to promote interdisciplinary cooperation, including between other universities, requires the effort and responsibility of everyone, especially on the part of the representatives of UNISCAPE, and for this reason, I believe it is necessary to coordinate said initiatives starting from the members of EB.
- c. Nominate specific appointees of EB, or by express delegation of the president, to coordinate, promote and offer new collaborations with public or private institutions able to implement UNISCAPE and the ELC. These collaborations require the generation of synergies between said institutions and UNISCAPE, thus making those resources available that the ensemble of our network’s universities, departments and centers can offer society by establishing specific agreements of collaboration. Naturally, this organization creates a capacity for encouraging incentives to obtain new funding that will contribute to the consolidation of UNISCAPE.

With this summary of declarations and the contribution of all of you, I hope to be able to count on your support and trust in order to be elected President of Uniscape 2021-2025.

Yours Sincerely

Juan Manuel Palerm Salazar

*Catedrático de Arquitectura ULPGC*

