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Reframing the relationships between people and place

MANIFESTO ON THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE

20 years ago, the European Landscape Convention (Florence 2000[1]) saw the potential of a fully integrated landscape perspective to contribute to a more sustainable relationship between society and environment based on the recognition of mutual co-dependency. Since the year 2000, new challenges and opportunities have entered the scene. Concerns around climate change, food and energy security, wellbeing, public health (e.g., pandemics), biodiversity loss, globalization, to mention but a few, are now central to societal and political agendas. On the other hand, systems thinking has expanded our possibilities to understand and take advantage of the synergic connections between the cultural, ecological, social, economic and perceptual dimensions of the landscape.

Within this new context, the goals of the Florence Convention are more valid than ever, best-practice case studies are in plentiful supply, but large-scale roll-out is lagging behind. As its point de départ, this Manifesto is founded on the principle that the governance and management of the European landscape should be guided by sustainability, democracy, human rights, rule of law, and cultural and environmental diversity[2]. It advocates throughout for a landscape-inclusive approach in all policy and planning fields that affect the landscape.

The Manifesto addresses all of European society, with special emphasis on governmental bodies at international, national, regional and local level, committed to a responsible future evolution of Europe and the European community.

[1] *Renamed the* Council of Europe Landscape Convention *by July 2021; in this Manifesto, the* Florence Convention, *after the city where it was opened for ratification in 2000*

[2] *See also* Manifesto of the Canary Islands for the European Landscape Project, *launched by the Canary Islands Landscape Observatory in 2011 (see www.UNISCAPE.eu)*

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Priority Area 1. **MAKING EUROPE: A PLACE FOR EVERYONE**

Caring for places, for the landscape as a public good, is an intergenerational commitment. It safeguards the future by uniting people behind a vision and a roadmap to deliver the kind of Europe we aspire to. Place-making is a communal and participative project that generates social capital, builds social resilience and is central to the future of the European landscape and communities. Public participation is achievable only if appropriate, complementary policies and resources are in place. This priority area asks to:

- Recognise landscape as one of Europe's most valuable and irreplaceable assets;
- Make optimal use of the integrative platform landscape offers to envisage the potential future character of the European space;
- Promote deeper connections between people and places through landscape-inclusive community building and a revised governance architecture that embraces bottom-up participation;
- Link the landscape with a participative definition of strategies, designs and visions for the evolution of Europe;
- Resource socio-cultural, environmental and cultural heritage activities in recognition of their role in reinforcing sustainable development at local and regional levels.

Priority Area 2. **LANDSCAPE AS MEDIATOR: TACKLING SOCIETAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES**

While the landscape paradigm has framed different national policies and EU Directives that speak, directly and indirectly, to the mutual dependency of people and environment, the Florence Convention has not been fully mobilised in this regard. Landscape as such is also a conceptual framework where real-time synergies between social and environmental policies, planning and action occur (Landscape-based Solutions). The future implementation of the Florence Convention should be employed to this end by:

- Advancing in the identification, characterisation and assessment of landscapes to inform planning and policies;
- Developing landscape quality objectives based on open, collective dialogue;

- Incorporating the landscape in all policies that affect the landscape at different scales;
- Including the landscape in statutory planning tools and related management and procedures at different scales relevant for landscape quality;
- Develop a Landscape Charter that positions the landscape as a pivotal concept in addressing broader challenges, such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the EU Green Deal, etc..

Priority Area 3. **LANDSCAPE KNOWLEDGE: BETTER DECISIONS - BETTER OUTCOMES**

Reliable, up-to-date data can inform and guide planning in a wide range of interconnected areas, offering protection against short-termism and competing policy objectives. To manage transitions in European landscapes, we have to improve the integration of disciplinary knowledge, data capture and analysis, and bridge the gap between scientific modelling and societal values and trends.

The educational challenge is to match sustainable development goals with appropriate levels of knowledge and understanding at all levels and across sectors. Without these, even minimal sustainable development goals will not be achieved, and we will not realise the values that define Europe. Therefore, it is essential to:

- Promote key competences for a sustainable society and environment such as systems thinking, anticipatory/future thinking, values thinking, strategic thinking and collaboration.
- Reinforce the socio-cultural and environmental dimensions of the landscape and its role in the definition of operative and integrative frameworks supporting sustainable development at local and regional levels;
- Engage an economic approach in landscape visioning and in the formulation of plans and policies for sustainable landscapes, safeguarding circular economies and an adequate balance between the global and the local;
- Acknowledge, describe, and expand the legal space of the landscape within the EU, national and regional juridical systems, recognising protection and management measures, and acknowledging the rights of communities to participate in decisions affecting the cultural and place-based dimensions of the landscape.

ACTIONING THE FLORENCE CONVENTION

The Florence Convention is an essential but under-utilised international instrument. Yet, the holistic, systemic principle of landscape remains central to addressing the urgent societal and environmental challenges facing us today. Based on the Priority Areas outlined above, we call for:

- An Action Plan for the Florence Convention, led by European and national institutions, based on open coordination and modelled on Faro Convention Action Plan, setting out exemplary policy initiatives, methodologies, tangible operative outcomes, and indicative milestones. The Action Plan should function as a one-stop shop for parties interested in actioning aspects of the Florence Convention.
- A Landscape Charter to reinforce the policy dimension of the Florence Convention by integrating landscape into specific and enforceable European, national and regional directives, policies, strategies and plans.
- Legal recognition and framing of the landscape at the European, national and regional level.
- Inclusion of the landscape dimension in new and emerging policy initiatives related to the sustainable development of Europe.
- Promotion of Landscape-Based Solutions as a tool to address socio-cultural and environmental challenges through community-based approaches. Raise landscape awareness and use of the landscape concept as a tool to develop the European identity and to express the values Europe stands by.
- Dedicated research strands on sustainable landscapes at European and national levels, linked to the principal European political, economic and societal agendas.

This Manifesto was initiated by UNISCAPE at the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the Florence Convention during the UNISCAPE Conference "Cultivating Continuity of the European Landscape", 16-17 October 2020. UNISCAPE wishes to acknowledge that positive feedback has since been received from a large diversity of organisations. The process facilitating the drafting of this Manifesto included several dedicated consultations. Organisations supporting the Manifesto have been invited to send their position papers, which can be consulted on a special web page at www.uniscape.eu.