

Nova Gorica-Gorizia UNISCAPE Declaration on Borderless Landscapes

In the Spirit of the Council of Europe Landscape Convention

Nova Gorica / Gorizia, June 2025

On the 25th anniversary of the Council of Europe Landscape Convention (Florence Convention), UNISCAPE reaffirms the central premise of the Convention: landscape is not confined to geographical or administrative borders but is a shared and evolving living place. The landscape dimension proposed by the Florence Convention is conceived as open and borderless, without boundaries, neither territorial nor conceptual.

Drawing on the Convention, the Explanatory Report, and Recommendation CM/Rec (2008)3 Guidelines, we articulate five foundational points for rethinking landscapes as inherently borderless.

1. Territorial Borders: Lines in the Sand

"Landscape is an area, as perceived by people" (Art. 1a), not defined by borders but by perception, memory, and interaction. Territorial divisions often obscure this continuity. We call for transboundary landscape governance, echoing the Report's call for international cooperation (Art. 9), urging Parties to "strengthen transfrontier cooperation at local and regional levels."

2. Borderscapes: Where Worlds Meet

Landscape is "an essential component of people's surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared cultural and natural heritage" (Preamble). Borderscapes are precisely such expressions—zones of complexity, encounter and hybridization. They embody the Convention's emphasis on public engagement and the diversity of perceptions (Art. 5c), creating fertile ground for inclusive landscape identities.

3. Climate Crisis: A Borderless Planet

Landscape is "not simply a matter for specialists but one in which all people have a role" (Explanatory Report, §56). In the face of climate change—a crisis without borders—we urge landscape policies that reflect ecological continuity across jurisdictions. The Report stresses the importance of integrating landscape into spatial and environmental policy (Art. 5d), reminding us that landscape is both "a resource" and "a means of countering environmental degradation."

4. Migrations: The Moving Nature of Living Beings

Landscapes are shaped through time by the presence and movement of people. Landscape as a “dynamic phenomenon” (Explanatory Report, §44) includes migration—human and more-than-human—as part of this dynamic, and calls for landscape policies that embrace displacement, memory, and transformation as generative forces of identity and care. Landscape gives space to everyone, gives place to “democratic citizenship.”

5. Fluid by Nature

Landscape, as “the result of a process in constant evolution” (Explanatory Report, §36), is inherently fluid —shaped by interactions, stories, seasons, and systems. A borderless approach must embrace this relational ontology, nurturing landscape literacy that is adaptive, plural, and grounded in care. This aligns with the convention’s objective to promote sustainable development “based on a balanced and harmonious relationship between social needs, economic activity and the environment” (Preamble).

In Conclusion

The Council of Europe's Landscape Convention has given Europe a vocabulary and legal framework through which to understand, protect, manage and plan its landscapes. UNISCAPE continues to foster landscape education and research in the spirit of these principles.

Today, on its 25th anniversary, we extend this vision beyond borders. Landscapes are living expressions of our ecological, cultural, and perceptual interdependence. UNISCAPE commits to advancing the Convention’s mission by fostering a culture of care, rooted in democratic participation, planetary awareness, and the freedom to imagine landscapes without walls.

Landscapes often bear the marks of violence, disaster, and displacement. They are not always habitable, or serene. Yet, they remain the only ground upon which awareness can emerge, a stillness that urges us to pause, reflect, and negotiate new ways of being together. In this way, landscape becomes a space where conflict is neither ignored nor erased but acknowledged and potentially transformed.

This declaration also stands as a collective call for peace, not by idealising landscape as inherently peaceful, but by recognising its complexity and wholeness.

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