



The European Landscape Consortium

A Partnership of
Leading European Specialist
Landscape Organisations

To:

The Council of the European Union; The European Commission; The European Parliament;
Council Presidency; Committee of the Regions

A Partnership of Leading European Organisations Specialising in Landscape Issues hereby calls on the European Union to use the 25th Anniversary of the Florence Convention as an Opportunity to put Landscape at the Heart of EU policy

The landscape is undoubtedly one of Europe's greatest assets, yet in EU policymaking it is largely ignored. This is a missed opportunity. Landscapes are the living fabric that link climate resilience, biodiversity, health, social cohesion, cultural heritage and economic vitality. When landscapes are neglected the costs to citizens, communities and the environment grow – from soil erosion to biodiversity loss, from degraded urban spaces to diminished cultural identity and societal resilience.

The 25th Anniversary – Time for the EU to take the Initiative

October 20th 2025 marks the 25th anniversary of the Council of Europe Landscape Convention (Florence Convention) – the first and only international treaty devoted to promoting landscape protection, management, and planning.

- **The Convention has been ratified by 41 of 46 Council of Europe member states, including 25 of the EU's 27 members.**
- Covers **all landscapes** across the whole territory – natural, rural, urban, peri-urban, degraded land, inland waters, and marine areas.
- Recognises landscape as **cultural, ecological, social, and economic capital**.

The Convention views landscape not as a restrictive concept or solely a matter of conservation, but as the shared outcome of the relationship between people and place – everywhere an expression of local culture and identity. Citizen participation in shaping landscape objectives is at its heart.

Why the EU Cannot Afford to Overlook Landscape

Despite its relevance to many EU policy areas – environment, climate, health, social cohesion, cultural heritage, agriculture, food security, transport, infrastructure, and regional policy – landscape rarely appears in EU legislation or strategy.

An **integrated, landscape-based approach** can:

- **Link policy areas** that are otherwise treated in isolation.
- **Make EU policies more accessible** and comprehensible to citizens ("landscape as the environment as perceived by people").
- **Contribute directly to many UN Sustainable Development Goals** to which the EU is committed.
- **Provide the basis for national, regional and local landscape strategies** to combat and mitigate climate change and biodiversity loss, and strengthen cultural identity.

From Mediterranean vineyards, Atlantic bocages, farmlands by majestic rivers, dunes and rocky coastlines to the urban and peri-urban landscapes where most people live – Europe's diverse landscapes are an unrivalled resource for prosperity, sustainability and well-being. Contributing to territorial cohesion if properly managed, Europe's landscapes are the medium through which to integrate and make more accessible many otherwise disparate policy fields.

Our Call to Action – Lead by Example

We, the undersigned specialist European landscape organisations, call on the **European Commission, the European Council, and the European Parliament** to work together to **become a contracting party to the Council of Europe Landscape Convention**, and to:

1. **Develop an integrated approach to landscape** for the European Union, analogous to that on cultural heritage, which recognises the mutual interaction between landscape and EU policy, and **create an EU Expert Group on Landscape** to advise the Commission and strengthen cross-DG policy integration.
2. **Establish a cooperation platform with the Council of Europe on landscape** to align efforts and share best practice, and **engage with the relevant EU Parliament committees** in hearings and joint initiatives.
3. **Mainstream landscape into EU flagship initiatives**, such as the Nature Restoration Law, the Green Deal, Climate Adaptation, and the New European Bauhaus, as well as existing cooperation programmes such as URBACT IV, Erasmus, EUI and Creative Europe, and **include strategic approaches to landscape in the core remit of the European Environment Agency and of ESPON**.
4. **Make landscape a key policy instrument** in the next Multi-annual Financial Framework and **Integrate landscape in EU research programmes such as Horizon Europe** and future framework programmes, to provide the necessary evidence base for policy making.
5. **Promote cross-border and transboundary programmes, using landscape as an integrating factor** for cohesion, reconciliation, and sustainable development, **while strengthening democratic participation through landscape literacy** by embedding education, awareness-raising, citizen engagement and capacity building into EU programmes.

A Unique Opportunity

The 25th anniversary of the Florence Convention is not only a milestone – it is a political opportunity for the EU to show leadership, join its member states, and give citizens a more connected, coherent, and human-centred policy framework. **We look forward to an early meeting with you to discuss how to progress implementing this initiative!**

Landscape is where EU policy meets the daily lives of Europeans. Let's make it visible. It's where we all live, so let's make it central.

Signed

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European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools
International Association of Landscape Ecology – European Chapter
International Association of Landscape Archaeology
International Federation of Landscape Architects – European Region
Landscape Research Group
LE:NOTRE Institute – Linking Landscape Education, Research and Innovative Practice
UNISCAPE – European Universities Network for Landscape Studies

