

Good afternoon everyone,

I would like to start by introducing myself. My name is Giovangiuseppe Vannelli; I am a researcher in Architectural and Urban Design at the Department of Architecture, University of Naples Federico II, and a member of the Executive Board as an Early Career Researcher.

I don't usually prefer to speak from a prepared speech in meetings like this, but in this case, I feel it is my duty to do so as I am here as a spokesperson for a larger group, namely: Chiara Caravello, MD Abdul Mueed Choudhury, Mattia Coccozza, Jacob Steinberg and Francesco Torelli, who told us he will be absent for a while for personal issues.

First of all, thank you. Thank you to the Uniscape Executive Board and in particular to the President Saša Dobričić for involving early-career researchers; for us, this represents an important opportunity to learn how to conduct research, to think about how to conduct research, and to meet colleagues with whom to conduct research. These three elements seem to us to be fundamental to Uniscape's work. A space for experimentation and growth, a context for the co-production of knowledge, and a forum for interaction and exchange.

For us, Uniscape represents a platform that connects, fosters dialogue, and sparks exchanges. From our perspective, Uniscape's significance lies in the fact that, as a European Network of Universities for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention, it functions as a cross-disciplinary infrastructure—unlike, for example, the disciplinary frameworks represented by scientific societies—and transcends the narrow sectoral focus of other major international networks. In this sense, one contribution we hope to make is to collaborate in order to forge cross-disciplinary relationships with precisely these other bodies and institutions which, although they have different perspectives or specific characteristics, contribute to the definition of a broader, more complex, strategic and political vision of the landscape.

Following our participation in the latest Executive Board meetings, we have outlined several proposals for actions that could be implemented progressively, always with the aim of disseminating and putting knowledge into practice.

First

- The submission of theses for the award under discussion could provide an opportunity to establish a **thesis archive**, a "Digital archive of bachelor's/master's/PhD theses from UNISCAPE universities", which would also be useful for organising data collection from all participating universities and conducting surveys to provide UNISCAPE with data. (e.g. the number of bachelor's/master's/PhD theses in landscape architecture, the topics covered, and the expectations, needs and interests of early-career researchers within the network).

Second

- In our opinion, it would be beneficial to strengthen UNISCAPE's role in **PhD programmes**, as this is a stage that engages a larger number of potential/future researchers who have a common need to exchange knowledge and orientate their career paths. In this regard, online meetings could be organised as round-table discussions to share insights on PhD paths, to which UNISCAPE members or potential members could be invited. These discussion forums could lead to the organisation of periodic events on "**thinking landscape through design/urbanism/ecology**", in which the transdisciplinary nature of the landscape is highlighted and promoted, along the lines of the "Where the disciplines meet" series. In this case, it could be the PhD students from Uniscape's affiliated doctoral schools themselves who propose topics and guests, subject to approval by the Executive Board.

Third

- To harness collective intelligence as an alternative to artificial intelligence, there could be an “**ask the young**” email service where young PhD students or early-career researchers can request information on potential professors to contact as partners in relation to specific topics or experiences within the Uniscape network. This idea is consistent with the concept of “buddies” and, above all, would help establish Uniscape not only as a resource but also as a showcase that highlights and shares (if possible, via the website) short bios and areas of interest of its members.

Then, some more practical activities follow:

- Young EBs could curate and organise **travelling exhibitions** in various universities that are part of the UNISCAPE network, promoting the dissemination of critical contributions on “landscape through design” emerging from their respective doctoral schools or degree programmes.

And lastly, a proposal that is already wider structured:

an **International Walking conferences** could be organised. The idea is to use movement and mindful presence on site as a tool for collective learning, observation and knowledge exchange. The event could follow existing thematic itineraries – such as the Santa Barbara Mining Trail in Sardinia – selecting a number of significant locations without necessarily covering the entire route.

The aim would be to create a context in which body and mind can work simultaneously: movement encourages attention to the landscape, critical reflection and dialogue amongst participants. The initiative would adopt a minimalist approach, inspired by hiking culture: sportswear, lightweight equipment and maximum focus on the shared experience rather than formal aspects. In this way, the landscape is not merely the conference topic, but the very place where knowledge is generated, discussed and shared.

The participants would be academics and professionals at all levels with an interest in the topic from different disciplinary perspectives. They would be selected through an international call for abstracts and short motivation letters. The contributions would not take the traditional form of presentations in a lecture hall, but would be shared during stops along the route, in an informal setting and without audiovisual support. Listening, first-hand accounts, questions and answers come together spontaneously during the walk and during moments of rest, fostering an in-depth and non-hierarchical exchange. The number of participants could not exceed 30 people, in order to ensure the quality of the experience and minimise the impact on the local area (the exact number of participants should be defined based on the chosen itinerary and conference duration).

The organisers would be responsible for defining the programme and itinerary in collaboration with local guides and experts on the area and topic, as well as launching the call for participation. As regards costs, participation would be free of charge; each participant would be responsible for their own travel, food and accommodation expenses. The first international walking conference (maybe titled Walking and Observing along the Way) could be organized in autumn 2027 or later.

- Other general ideas relate to open to a **broader public** including high school/ work with younger generations. Work on breaking linguistic barriers by adopting universal languages such as walking, gardening, drawing, building something together...

These are some of the initiatives we have discussed, and we believe they could be a valuable addition to the conferences and seminars already organised by Uniscape, such as this wonderful event that has brought us together here in Turin today.

Thank you all once again for your attention.