

Our distinguished Hungarian Hosts

Dear colleagues and participants

As chair of the Council of Europe Conference on the European Landscape Convention I will warmly thank the Government of Hungary, the Ministry of Agriculture of Hungary and the Council of Europe – Directorate of Democratic Governance, Secretariat of the European Landscape Convention for organising this workshop.

At this meeting we will have a presentation of the fourth session of the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe – 2014-2015.

As you will see - all the projects attending the Award are very good - and in different ways they have adopted to protect, manage and plan their landscape. They show that it is possible to promote the territorial dimension of human rights and democracy improving the landscape features of people's surroundings.

Yesterday our Hosts invited to a study visit in the Hetés Microregion on the border of Slovenia and Hungary. There we had the opportunity to meet the local inhabitants and visit some of the unique landscape assets of Hetés. We will have a presentation of the project in our workshop, but to be there and see what they have achieved was impressive. We saw the great value in taking care of local traditions and how it strengthens solidarity and pride in their own identity and landscape.

Personally was the strongest impression the poetic symbol of "Bird without Borders" made out of the rusty barbed wire found in the woods that used to be part of the Iron Curtain and now placed on the border in the Park of Friendship. They have been able to turn a grim past into art giving hope.

Europe today needs to be inspired by this "Bird without Borders" and the cooperation in the Hetés in the spirit of the European Landscape Convention.

I wish this Workshop great success.