



**COUNCIL OF EUROPE
EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION**

***SEVENTEENTH COUNCIL OF EUROPE MEETING
OF THE WORKSHOPS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION***

***Council of Europe Landscape Award Forum
of National Selections***

4th Session 2014-2015

**Budapest, Hungary
9-10 June 2016**

<http://www.coe.int/en/web/landscape/17th>

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

Mrs Maria José FESTAS, Chair of the Jury of the 4th Session of the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe and Honorary Chair of the Council of Europe Conference of the European Landscape Convention

Before the formal start of the 17th Workshop, on the 8th of June, we had the pleasure of visiting the Hetés Microregion on the border between Slovenia and Hungary. The study visit, organised by our host, the Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture, had the co-operation of the local authorities of the communities and associations involved in the project presented by Hungary to the 4th Session of the Council of Europe Landscape Award. This study visit, shared between Hungary and Slovenia, allowed us to experience the reality and importance of the involvement and commitment of the local authorities and communities in this transborder co-operation project.

In this 17th Meeting of the Workshop for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention, and simultaneously a meeting of the Council of Europe Landscape Award Forum of National Awards, all the 12 projects selected at national level as candidates to the 4th Session of the Council of Europe Landscape Award were publicly presented and explained by those responsible for them¹.

¹ See list in the Appendix.

The national process of selection was also explained by the respective European Landscape Convention national delegate, showing the diversity of procedures that, while respecting the rules and criteria of the Council of Europe Landscape Award, allows each State to define their own procedures. This once again confirms the respect of subsidiarity that the European Landscape Convention's flexibility allows, which is one of the reasons for its success.

At the end of the first day of the Meeting, there was a special Ceremony of the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention, in which all the projects were praised².

According to the decision of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, on 14th October 2015, in accordance with the Resolution of the Committee of Ministers CM/Res(2008)3 on the rules governing the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe, and on the recommendation of the jury and the Committee of experts responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Convention:

– the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention for the 4th Session of the Award 2014-2015 was attributed to *The borderless co-operation of local communities for the landscape heritage of the 'Fabulous' Hetés*, the villages of Bödeháza, Gáborjánháza, Szijártóháza and Zalasombatfa (Hungary), the villages of Genterovci, Kamovci, Radmožanci, Žitkovci, Mostje, Banuta (Slovenia), Greenways Methodology Association and the Iron Curtain Trail Association, a Project presented by Hungary;

– Identical special mentions for the 4th Session of the Landscape Award 2014-2015 of the Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention were presented to the following projects:

- *The Service Tree, the tree of the Slovácko Region*, Municipality of Tvarožná Lhota and NGO International Exchanges (INEX), Voluntary Service of the White Carpathians, presented by the Czech Republic;

- *Liptovská Teplička: protection of unique types of historical landscape*, Village of Liptovská Teplička, presented by the Slovak Republic;

- *The Sénia Territory Millennium Olive Tree Landscape*, Taula del Sénia Mancomunidad, presented by Spain.

Returning to the Meeting of the Workshops, these conclusions will not focus specifically on the projects presented because, as mentioned above, they were all presented and discussed and details can be found on the European Landscape Convention website. Instead, it will present a short global analysis of this 4th Session of the Landscape Award³.

² See programme of the ceremony on the European Landscape Convention website:
<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016806555f5>

³ <http://www.coe.int/en/web/landscape/17th>

Most of the projects focused on what we might call protection or rehabilitation of landscape, mostly dealing with rural landscapes; some focused on what can be considered peri-urban landscapes and one is clearly an urban landscape, focused on public space.

Interestingly, all the projects had strong involvement from the local communities, in many cases resulting from local initiatives. A common feature was also a wish to make the most of the existing or potential assets (natural, cultural, social and economic) and the landscapes more sustainable in the future, even economically.

But at the same time, it seemed that the landscape itself was not the starting point or goal of many of the projects, but that it was an “afterthought” or an “added-value” discovered after the project started. Ultimately, however, all the projects had a role in raising or strengthening the awareness of the populations involved to landscape values and thus makes an important contribution to the future landscape management of those areas.

We need to consider this carefully, as we may risk allowing the Convention to become a “protection” Convention instead of being the basis for policies and strategies for landscapes as dynamic as the world is today. We must also avoid the Convention becoming dedicated to rural landscapes. It is true that most of our territory is still rural, but we cannot forget that the majority of the population lives in urban areas, and a good quality urban landscape is indispensable to a good quality of life. However, as I have said many times, we need to prepare to create good new landscapes that will become new values to future generations.

Considering the experience of the Award to date, and what we heard these two days, both during the Workshops and the breaks, I would like to present some proposals for the future:

- my first proposal, considering that the next session of the Landscape Award will be the fifth, is that, after that session, the Council of Europe Conference on the European Landscape Convention makes an assessment of the experience of the Award. This would be an assessment of the follow-up of the projects presented and the lessons learned both at European and national level – let us not forget that the Award concerns projects that are considered “lastingly effective and can serve as an example” of “sustainable protection, management and/or planning of the landscapes”;

- my second proposal is to organise an exhibition at the Palais de l’Europe with all the projects presented during all the previous sessions. The idea is not only to raise awareness of the national delegates in relation to the Award but more importantly to show all the institutions of the Council of Europe – the Ambassadors (representing the Committee of Ministers), the Parliamentary Assembly and the members of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities – the results and the added-value of the European Landscape Convention. So this idea, together with the when and where of a possible exhibition could be discussed at the next Conference of the Parties;

- a third proposal concerns the possibility of having the meeting of the Forum of National Awards with the candidate projects before the meeting of the Jury, the Award being given during a Meeting of the Workshop dealing with themes other than the Landscape Award, as at the 1st Session of the Landscape Award. I know there are some dangers in this (a very good public presentation could influence the decision), but the possibility of raising questions and having more explanations could be interesting for the procedure. This may also have logistical and financial costs that need to be considered.

As Chair of the Jury of this 4th session of the Award, I would also like to express my gratitude and to mention the good work and all the help from the Members of the Jury and the Secretariat. Without them, I would not have been able to my job.

In conclusion, I would like to offer my personal congratulations to all involved in the projects that were presented. They all had great quality and excellently demonstrate the diversity of landscape

interventions and solutions that the European Landscape Convention framework promotes and allows. As the decision of the Committee of Ministers mentions, they should also be acknowledged and praised and made well-known to the general public for their exemplary value, and as sources of inspiration.

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APPENDIX

Council of Europe Landscape Award Forum of National Selections

4th Session 2014-2015

<http://www.coe.int/en/web/landscape/publications>
The Landscape Award Alliance of the Council of Europe,
Territory and Landscape Series, 2016, N°103

The borderless co-operation of local communities for the landscape heritage of the “Fabulous” Hetés, the villages of Bödeháza, Gáborjánháza, Szigártóháza and Zalasombatfa (Hungary), the villages of Genterovci, Kamovci, Radmožanci, Žitkovci, Mostje, Banuta (Slovenia), Greenways Methodology Association and the Iron Curtain Trail Association, Hungary.

The Service Tree, the tree of the Slovácko Region, Municipality of Tvarožná Lhota and NGO International Exchanges (INEX) - Voluntary Service of the White Carpathians, Czech Republic.

Liptovská Teplička: protection of unique types of historical landscape, Village of Liptovská Teplička, Slovak Republic.

The Sénia Territory Millennium Olive Tree Landscape, Taula del Sénia Mancomunidad, Spain.

The Enhancement of the natural site and landscape of Hof ter Musschen, Commission on the Environment of Brussels and its environs asbl, Belgium.

The Ecomuseum Blaca Hermitage, Cultural Centre of Brač, Croatia.

Development of the historical centre of Agios Athanasios Municipality, Municipality of Agios Athanasios, Cyprus.

The “Bull by the horns”: grazing in nature and landscape management, Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment for Central Finland, Finland.

The Agricultural Park of Paduli, Open Urban Laboratory, Italy.

The town of Kuldīga in the Venta Valley: preserving a unique landscape for future generations, Kuldīga Municipality, Latvia.

The New Dutch Waterline, Board of the New Dutch Waterline, the Netherlands.

Biodiversity and natural resources management in the Camili Basin, Camili Environmental Protection and Development Association, Turkey.

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