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**EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION
– Florence Convention –**

***FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING
AND SIGNATORY STATES TO
THE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION***

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Theme 5

The Council of Europe Landscape Award

by

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1. The Award in the European Landscape Convention

Article 11 of the European Landscape Convention provides for the setting up of a Council of Europe Landscape Award. This award may be conferred on local and regional authorities and their groupings and on non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that have instituted a policy or measures to protect, manage and/or plan their landscape, which have proved lastingly effective and can thus serve as an example to other territorial authorities in Europe.

Transfrontier local and regional authorities and groupings of local or regional authorities may apply provided that they jointly manage the landscape in question.

Local and regional authorities, their groupings and NGOs should apply through their member state, which will only put forward the national winner as candidate for the European award.

Applications for the Council of Europe Landscape Award are to be submitted to the committees of experts responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Convention. Following proposals by the committees of experts, the Committee of Ministers determines and publishes the selection criteria and the rules governing the Landscape Award, and designates the winner.

The granting of the Council of Europe Landscape Award is to encourage those receiving the award to ensure the sustainable protection, management and/or planning of the landscape areas concerned.

2. Pilot project of a Landscape Award as part of the “Europe, a common heritage” campaign

In 2000, as part of the “Europe, a common heritage” campaign, the Council of Europe set up a Landscape Award to help promote European landscapes.

All local and regional authorities and NGOs in the Council of Europe member states were invited to take part. The first stage of the selection process was to choose the national candidates, one NGO and one local or regional authority, for the award. The national authorities then passed on the best initiatives to the Council of Europe Secretariat to compete for the Council of Europe Landscape Award.

The award was intended to recompense specific, practical initiatives - either fully completed or sufficiently well under way - in the field of landscape quality in one of the three following categories:

- public awareness, education and participation;
- scientific and technical activities;
- protection, management and planning.

Thirteen projects were submitted by the following countries: Germany, Austria, Croatia, Spain, Estonia, the Russian Federation, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Romania, Turkey and Ukraine, five of them in the NGO category.

An international jury of five members met on 21 November 2000.

The winner in the “Local and regional authorities” category was the Welsh county Vale of Glamorgan.

The award in the “NGOs” category went to the Ecological Institute for Sustainable Development of Miskolc, Hungary, for its project in the “sustainable village” of Gömörzsolos, a typical village in the north of the country.

The Czech project “The garden of Europe” in the “Local and regional authorities” category and the Polish project “Garden city” by the Friends of Podkowa Lesna in the “NGOs” category were both highly commended.

The awards, diplomas of symbolic value only, were conferred by the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr Hans Christian Krüger, at the closing ceremony for the campaign in Riga, Latvia, on 8 December 2000.

3. Other landscape awards

Some examples of existing landscape awards are worth mentioning:

The Mediterranean Landscape Prize

The Mediterranean Landscape Prize was organised for the first time in 1999-2000 by 15 Regions of Spain, France and Italy with the support of the Council of Europe and the Italian Ministry of Cultural Assets and the Environment. It is awarded under the Interreg programme on the Western Mediterranean and Latin Alps. The fifteen regions that took part were: Andalusia, Basilicata, Calabria, Languedoc-Roussillon, Latium, Liguria, Lombardy, Murcia, Umbria, Piedmont, Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur, Sardinia, Sicily, Tuscany and Val d’Aosta. Each region drew up a list of applications for projects within its boundaries.

The aim of this prize is to help draw the attention of society in general and political leaders in particular to the landscape and the importance of quality requirements. It is to be awarded every three years.

Any private individual or public or private legal entity may submit an application. There were three categories for this first edition:

Category A: contemporary work on historic and heritage sites;

Category B: projects to transform or create landscapes or rehabilitate sites;

Category C: planning (land development).

An extremely detailed application form must be submitted. A Regional Selection Committee chooses three applications from among all those received for projects within its boundaries. An International Selection Committee then chooses a maximum of nine or ten applications from among the projects forwarded by the regional committees to be submitted to an international panel. The international jury of seven members visits each of the selected sites.

The various stages in the scheme were co-ordinated by a transnational committee comprising Sardinia, Andalusia and Languedoc-Roussillon and the Languedoc-Roussillon Region provided the secretariat services.

The 1999-2000 Mediterranean Landscape Prize was awarded to Impruneta (Florence) in November 2000 after six applicants had reached the international selection stage.

The Unesco Melina Mercouri Prize

The “Melina Mercouri International Prize for the Safeguarding and Management of Cultural Landscapes (UNESCO/Greece)” is named after the famous Greek artiste who was also her country’s Minister for Culture and one of the precursors of integrated conservation and sustainable development.

The prize is awarded every two years for outstanding schemes to safeguard and enhance the world’s great cultural landscapes.

It was set up in response to the need – highlighted by the World Heritage Committee at its 16th session in Santa Fe in 1992 – to protect cultural landscapes, a far wider notion than the traditional one of monuments and sites. It was awarded for the first time in 1999.

The prize may be awarded either to an individual or to a group of persons, working in a personal capacity or as staff member(s) of a private or public institution responsible for protecting or managing a cultural landscape in one of three categories defined by the World Heritage Committee. Applications must be submitted by a member state or an NGO officially recognised by Unesco.

The prize is awarded by the Director General of Unesco on the recommendation of an international jury of five members: three specialists in the environmental field and the heritage, the Permanent Delegate of Greece and a representative of the Director General of Unesco.

In 1999, the prize, which was worth \$30 000, was awarded to three laureates: the *Valle de Viñales* (Cuba), the Open-Air Art Museum at Pedvale (Latvia) and Elishia’s Park in Jericho (Autonomous Palestinian Territories). Three “Honourable Mentions” were given to China, Spain and Germany and Poland and a “Special Mention” was awarded to Greece.

In 2001, the prize, which was worth \$20 000, was awarded to two laureates: the *Djebel Murdjadjo*, the forest and the old town of Sid Houari in Oran, Algeria, and the Heathland Centre at Lygra, Norway. No honourable mention was given this year.

The next edition will be organised in 2003.

4. Proposals on the approach to be taken

Existing experience should be used as a starting point for discussions on the Council of Europe Landscape Award and proposals on the procedure to be set up.

The aim of the Council of Europe Landscape Award is to stimulate a process that could be launched by states throughout Europe to encourage and acknowledge outstanding landscape

management. The Landscape Award could be the highest reward in a process involving national competitions and national support for the local and regional authorities concerned.

Local and regional authorities, their groupings and NGOs could compete for a national award granted each year on the same date in every European country (1 October, for example) at the highest level. The Contracting Parties to the convention would assess the applications for national awards and could put forward the national winner as a candidate for the European award. These national awards could be conferred on the same day, which could be designated “Landscape Day” when the prize is awarded for the first time.

The projects of the national award winners would then be forwarded to the Council of Europe’s committees of experts, and the Committee of Ministers would confer the Council of Europe Landscape Award on the basis of the committees’ recommendations.

Press conferences could be held at the Council of Europe and in the capitals of the participating countries, which could publish the results of their national competitions.

The machinery for launching the award must be carefully studied and would include, in particular, guidelines on:

- the jury (number of members, chair, etc);
- the arrangements concerning the award (how often it is to be conferred, selection criteria, applications, selection procedure, drawing up of the rules, and so on).