



Ministry of Environmental
Protection and Regional
Development
Republic of Latvia



Daugavpils
City Council



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

***Council of Europe Landscape Award Forum
of National Selections
5th Session 2016-2017***

**Daugavpils, Latvia
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*Study visit, 19 June 2018***

Regeneration of the landscape and archaeological Park of the Valley of the Temples in Agrigento
Department of Cultural Heritage and Identity of Sicily, Italy

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Italy has participated in the European Landscape Award since its institution, organising a national competition for each session, guided by the criteria outlined in the CM/Res(2008)3 resolution. This was not only the result of the commitment made within the European Landscape Convention in accordance with Article 11, but also the interpretation of the national selection procedure as a chance for the world of culture and all the territorial managing stakeholders to promote and disseminate the values of landscape and, consequently, to spread the knowledge of the European Landscape Convention.

In this spirit, the Italian Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism, in charge of Landscape protection and of the whole selection procedure, has promoted informative activities through public events, in an attempt to give maximum visibility and to spread good practices. In addition, the Ministry has created an institutional website (www.premiopaesaggio.beniculturali.it): besides publishing information about the application rules, all the projects submitted to the Ministry from previous award sessions are easily accessible and create, over the years, a growing thematic database of best practice examples, a type of

structure which has subsequently been adopted by the Council of Europe with the Landscape Award Alliance.

As a conclusion to each session's procedures, which are meant to be as open, transparent and participative as possible, the Ministry organises a public event aimed at disseminating the results of the evaluation process to a larger public audience, as well as presenting the Italian candidate for the Council of Europe Landscape Award.

The Ministry, showing a particular interest in the subject, established, through DM 7 October 2016, n. 457, the "National Landscape Day" (its aims are, among others, ... "transmitting to younger generations the message that landscape protection and the study of its historical memory represent essential cultural values and the premise for a conscious use of the territory and sustainable development...") and the National Landscape award "with the aim of encouraging the community to design specific activities for the awareness, education, use, promotion and regeneration of the landscape. Since 2017, as a result of these policies, the Italian project that is proposed as a candidate for the Council of Europe Landscape Award is granted the Italian Landscape Award, on the occasion of the National Landscape day, 14 March.

A specific Research project has been carried out at the Landscape Protection Office, General Directorate for Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape (Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism), to assess the consistency and quality of the participation to the five Award editions, from 2008 to 2017. The results, examining the total 361 applications over the years, have pointed out a direct correlation between the participant numbers and the level of publicity, events and communication concerning the selection, with a peak of 97 in the latest session. However, the number of thematical and special mentions assigned by the Italian committee has not been lower in editions with lower numbers of submissions, showing a consistent standard of the projects.

Throughout time, three special mentions have been attributed by the Council of Europe to Italian candidates: Val di Cornia (2008), LIBERA (2012), and in the latest session, Agri Gentium (2016). In the 2010-2011 session, the Italian candidate "Carbonia landscape machine" was granted the Landscape Award.

The research has also analysed the type of proposals considering their actors: Local or regional authorities (public administrations) represent the vast majority in all sessions (globally, 67%), compared to non-governmental institutions (associations, 29%, foundations, 3%). Likewise, geographical distribution was taken into account in terms of quantity and quality, with Sicily, Emilia-Romagna, Apulia, Lombardy and Piedmont being the most active regions.

The participants to the national selection represent exemplary actions carried out on the Italian territory through sustainable politics of ethical and economic development. The selection criteria for the Italian candidate has focused in the different sessions on specific aspects: landscape management and protection projects seen as strategies which reaffirm multiple landscape values: the recognition of a territorial network (Val di Cornia parks); the regeneration of a landscape in its ethical aspects (Alto Belice Corleonese. LIBERA); the creation of a new territorial identity, linked to 20th century productive landscape (Carbonia landscape machine); and the bottom-up regeneration of the territory through the retrieval of traditional high quality cultivation (Parco agricolo dei Paduli).

The selecting committee identified the project "Agri Gentium. Landscape Regeneration of the Landscape and Archaeological Park of the Valley of the Temples in Agrigento" as the Italian candidate for the 5th session of the award (2016/17), recognising its ability to put into practice the principles of the European Landscape Convention and the Italian landscape policies, through excellence practices, among them:

- being able to co-ordinate the actions of public and private partners, with the aim of landscape protection and management;

- recreating traditional products of high quality and reminding agronomic practices of the ancient Sicilian tradition;
- combining agricultural production with the protection and enhancement of a unique archaeological and historical heritage;
- enhancing use of rural areas through innovative educational and touristic projects;
- creating a network of relationships with the previously activated projects of the Kolymbetra garden and the recovery of the dismissed Kaos railway, carried out with the encouragement of the ministry;
- proving, through the demolition of unauthorised buildings built within the Park site, a strong ethical value, representative of a possible new pact between the territory and the community.

The different aspects of the project reinforce each other and, involving local communities, manage to increase awareness, participation and democratisation of the processes. The park, acting as a catalyst and a reference for the territory, gains a new role, virtually widening the influence of the projects beyond its real boundaries.

The essence itself of landscape is a perpetual evolution and transformation, even in its daily management and protection, and every landscape project is necessarily constituted by gradual steps; hence, as this on-going project proves, the award candidatures and awards cannot be seen as the end result, or the accomplishment of a project, but unavoidably as a further encouragement to keep alive the pursuit of the original aims, in the attempt to maintain the original quality and utility for the community that fostered it.