



COUNCIL OF EUROPE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION

11th COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONFERENCE ON THE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION

*Conference organised under the auspices of the Presidency of Hungary
of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe*

Council of Europe
Palais de l'Europe, Strasbourg
26-27 May 2021
Online meeting [Room 9]

Closing speech

*Mr Matjaž GRUDEN,
Director of Democratic participation, Council of Europe*

Dear Chair,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of all the participants, I wish to thank the authorities of Hungary for placing this Conference under the auspices of their Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. It was a great pleasure and interest to participate in this Conference and to see the extent of the work developed.

I would like to say again very special thanks to the Chair of this Conference, Mrs Krisztina Kincses and to wish a successful continuation to its next Chair, Mr Gilles Rudaz, and Vice-Chair, Mrs Jelena Hladnik

I was also very pleased to meet all participants of this Conference, even virtually. I thank the Representatives of the Ministries of the Parties to the Convention for their presentations on the experience of the national policy developed by their State, and their contributions to the debates. We were also very pleased to welcome the observer states, the representative of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations.

I would like to emphasise the importance of the reference texts prepared and adopted as they can guide public policies according to a “common understanding”, a “common intelligence”. The tools developed and the institutional framework established are essential. Furthermore, the co-operation network you have developed over the years is of inestimable value.

I will conclude by quoting from the Report by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe 2021 “State of democracy, human rights and the rule of law – A democratic renewal for Europe” [SG\(2021\)1](#) / 07 May 2021, presented at the 131st Session of the Committee of Ministers held on 21 May 2021 in Hamburg (Germany):

“Protecting the environment to preserve democracy, human rights and our quality of life

■ Council of Europe work on the protection of wildlife and natural habitat conservation, promotion of appropriate public policies and preventing major hazards is directly relevant to our capacities to face major global challenges, including the Covid-19 pandemic.

■ ... Natural environments and accessible green spaces play a direct role in health and well-being. They can mitigate climate change impacts such as extreme temperatures or flooding; reduce pollution in air, soil or water; and lower the risks of disasters caused by the combination of extreme weather events and land erosion, as in the case of flooding and landslides.

European Landscape Convention – Reverse the degradation of the living environment

■ Developments in spatial and town planning, transport, infrastructure, agriculture, industrial production techniques and, at a more general level, changes in the world economy are accelerating the transformation of everyday landscapes. If these transformations are not controlled, they cause health problems and a feeling of unease, even exclusion, which is at the root of social problems. The convention aims to promote landscape protection, management and planning, and to organise international co-operation on landscape issues.”

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