



FLORENCE CONVENTION

25th Anniversary of the Council of Europe Landscape Convention

28 October 2025

Florence, Italy

Villa Medicea “La Petraia”

Ministerial Conference

Florence Declaration

REF: T-FC (2025) CONF 5 E



MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE MARKING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE LANDSCAPE CONVENTION

Florence, 28 October 2025

Declaration

With the adoption of the Landscape Convention in 2000, and subsequent recommendations of the Committee of Ministers, the Council of Europe recognised the vital role of landscapes in the cultural, ecological, environmental, economic, and social fields.

The Convention presents innovative frameworks for adaptive planning that evolves as societies transform their way of life, their development and surroundings. It creates the necessary space to effectively address emerging global challenges, including the triple planetary crisis of pollution, climate change and loss of biodiversity.

Moreover, culture-based solutions, particularly those rooted in tangible and intangible cultural heritage, offer valuable answers to both mitigating and adapting to climate change while aiding in ecosystem restoration.

The pivotal role of landscape has been highlighted in the Committee of Ministers Recommendations to member States “on the contribution of the European Landscape Convention to the exercise of human rights and democracy with a view to sustainable development” (CM/Rec(2017)7), and “on the implementation of the Council of Europe Landscape Convention – Landscape and Health” (CM/Rec(2025)1).

The Convention regards landscape as a collective result of the relationship between people and places, a vital bond between communities and their territories. Landscape is an essential component of people’s surroundings and an expression of their identity and diversity, history, as well as their shared cultural and natural heritage. It is more than a matter of conservation and thus requires a multidisciplinary and participatory approach, and proper planning and management.

The quality of landscape has an impact on the realisation of several fundamental rights set out in the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, in relevant protocols thereto, and in the European Social Charter and its related treaties and protocols.

Over the past 25 years, the Landscape Convention has triggered major strides in developing legal and policy frameworks for the sustainable planning, management, and protection of landscapes at all levels of governance.

The Convention has served as a platform for the preparation of guidance and information tools, drawing on the experiences shared among its States Parties and the expertise gathered from multiple stakeholders.

In this context, the Landscape Award, launched in 2008 recognises exemplary landscape policies and initiatives led by local or regional authorities and NGOs and contributes to raising public awareness of the role of landscapes in well-being, identity, and democratic participation.

The progress achieved in implementing the Convention includes the identification and protection of landscapes of exceptional quality and importance, expansion of terrestrial and marine protected areas, development of an integrated approach to culture, nature and landscape management, increased cross-sectoral coordination, enhanced social inclusion, improved access to healthy landscapes and a meaningful involvement of local communities and stakeholders in the sustainable management and planning of landscapes.

The Landscape Convention also has a strong link with democratic governance, particularly through the obligation to inform and to establish procedures for the participation of the general public, local and regional authorities, and other parties with an interest in the definition and implementation of landscape policies. This participatory approach is crucial not only for protecting landscapes, but also for countering democratic backsliding and rebuilding trust in institutions. By empowering communities, the Convention fosters spaces for public debate and meaningful participation, especially around environmental challenges that are directly relevant to people's lives.

Human rights and the environment are deeply intertwined. Therefore, it is essential to pursue all possible efforts to regenerate degraded areas and zones, particularly disused and degraded sites, and places experiencing biodiversity loss and an accelerated desertification as a result of intensive soil exploitation, thereby initiating virtuous processes to overcome environmental challenges. As stated in the Reykjavík Declaration adopted by Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe in 2023 “a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is integral to the full enjoyment of human rights by present and future generations”.

The environment is facing an unprecedented, alarming, degradation that also affects landscapes. Climate change constitutes a pressing global challenge, with profound negative impacts on landscapes and cultural heritage; likewise, biodiversity loss and pollution are accelerating at an extremely worrying pace. Resource use has tripled over the last fifty years, and by 2060 a 60% growth in resource use in relation to 2020 levels is expected¹. The triple planetary crisis undermines food security, public health, and the essential benefits that nature provides to society, while jeopardising human rights, democracy and the rule of law. In this context, major challenges and opportunities arise for the enhancement and management of landscapes, recalling the Convention's important role in the cultural, ecological, environmental, and social fields.

As stated in the 2023 Reykjavík Declaration, the Council of Europe, through the Landscape Convention, has a long-standing and widely acknowledged track record in protecting the environment, environmentally friendly landscape management and public health, having both the tools and the structures to address human rights and the environment, in the spirit of co-operation and by sharing experience and promising practices.

In view of the above, we, the Ministers and other State representatives, meeting in Florence on 28 October 2025:

1. RECOGNISE the contribution of the Landscape Convention to the quality of life of citizens and that it is an important tool for addressing the challenges of the 21st century.
2. further RECOGNISE, the urgency of additional and necessary efforts to secure and promote a good quality of landscapes and to counter the adverse impacts of environmental degradation on human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

¹ [UNEP Global Resources Outlook 2024](#), United Nations Environment Programme.

3. AGREE to use the Landscape Convention as a multilateral cooperation platform to contribute to the implementation of the “Reykjavik Declaration on the Council of Europe and the Environment”.
4. WELCOME the adoption of the Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment and commit to contribute to meeting its objectives, in particular through the integration of human rights and democratic governance considerations in the sustainable planning, management, and protection of landscapes.
5. UNDERLINE in this respect that diversity, equality, inclusion and non-discrimination must be promoted within both decision-making processes and their outcomes to ensure that the specific rights and needs of persons and persons belonging to groups in vulnerable situations and/or exposed to discrimination are duly taken into account in the context of landscape policies.
6. WELCOME the New Democratic Pact for Europe launched by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and underline the role of the Landscape Convention in this context, as an important instrument to promote democratic multi-level governance, enhance civil participation in political decision-making, and access to information through a multi-stakeholder and inclusive approach to landscape management that values public participation, active citizenship and local collaboration.
7. AGREE to further improve and promote procedures for public participation in landscape policymaking as essential to fostering good governance, co-creation of knowledge and responsive services that meet the needs of local population, taking into account relevant Council of Europe instruments.
8. RECOGNISE the need for innovative solutions to address current environmental challenges, including in the social, cultural and economic sphere, and note the importance of integrating landscape into sectoral policies to ensure coherence and support holistic planning, territorial cohesion and sustainable development.
9. AGREE to promote sustainable landscape management and planning through multidisciplinary plans and projects, implemented by competent authorities in partnership with local communities and stakeholders, to support integrated and balanced land use management, environmental preservation and restoration, and societal well-being. This includes the safeguarding and integration of cultural landscapes, as distinctive expressions of the historical co-existence between humans and nature, which represent a cornerstone of community identity and a vital part of Europe’s shared cultural heritage.
10. ENCOURAGE exchanging good practices of the use of Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) to enhance urban, rural, coastal, and marine landscapes through sustainable resource-efficient interventions, developing also adaptation and mitigation measures to climate change.
11. UNDERLINE the need for enhanced multistakeholder cooperation addressing the challenges posed to the landscape quality by the triple planetary crisis and finding innovative, human rights compliant and sustainable solutions for the sake of societies.

Participants at the ministerial conference are grateful to the Italian authorities for hosting the event.