



COUNCIL OF EUROPE LANDSCAPE CONVENTION
LANDSCAPE AWARD OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

9th Session – 2025-2026

APPLICATION FORM

State Party: Poland

Presentation

The Council of Europe Landscape Convention is the first international treaty to be exclusively concerned with all aspects of landscape: natural, rural, urban and peri-urban. It represents an important contribution to the implementation of the Council of Europe's objectives. By taking into account the value of landscapes, with their natural and human components, the Council of Europe acknowledges that the landscape is an important part of the quality of life for people everywhere: in degraded areas as well as in areas of high quality, in areas recognised as being of outstanding beauty as well as everyday areas.

The 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government, held in Reykjavik on 16 – 17 May 2023, recognised “the urgency of additional efforts to protect the environment, as well as to counter the impact of the triple planetary crisis of pollution, climate change and loss of biodiversity on human rights, democracy and the rule of law.” It committed the Council of Europe to strengthening work on the human rights aspects of the environment and initiate the Reykjavik process of focusing and strengthening the work of the Council of Europe in this field, as laid down in Appendix V of the Reykjavik Declaration on “The Council of Europe and the environment”.

Appendix V of the Reykjavik Declaration references the Landscape Convention to highlight that “landscape has an important public interest role in the cultural, ecological, environmental and social fields and is a key element of individual and social well-being, and that landscape protection, management and planning entail rights and responsibilities for everyone.”

Article 11 of the Convention establishes the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe. The Resolution CM/Res(2008)3 on the rules governing the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 February 2008 at the 1018th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies, draws attention to the fact that Article 11 of the Convention institutes the Award and that it is in keeping with the work carried out by the Council of Europe concerning human rights, democracy and sustainable development.

Opened to the Parties to the Convention, the Award is intended to raise civil society's awareness of the value of landscapes, of their role and of changes to them. Its objective is to reward exemplary practical initiatives aimed at successful landscape quality objectives on the territories of the Parties to the Convention. The Award is conferred every two years and the files presenting applications must reach the Secretariat General of the Council of Europe.

At its meeting held in Strasbourg on 28-29 April 2008, the Steering Committee for Cultural Heritage and Landscape (CDPATEP) decided that applications should be submitted to the Council of Europe Secretariat through the Permanent Representations of the Parties to the Convention.

Each State Party to the Convention is thus invited to send by post to the Secretariat General of the Council of Europe (Council of Europe Landscape Convention), no later than 31 December 2025, via its Permanent Representation to the Council of Europe, a completed application form in paper format, together with a digital copy on a USB key of the form and additional material.

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Please note that:

- participation to the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe is only open to local and regional authorities and their groupings and non-governmental organisations, as stated in the Resolution CM/Res (2008)3, Appendix, Article 2;*
- the application form must be completed in all its parts, in one of the two official languages of the Council of Europe (English or French);*

- *the materials submitted must be copyright-free, for use by the Council of Europe in communications aimed at promoting the Award or any other publications or activities relating to the Convention. The Council of Europe undertakes to cite the authors' names;*
- *files that are incomplete or fail to comply with the rules will not be taken into consideration.*

For further information please visit the Landscape Award section of the Council of Europe website:

[Convention du Conseil de l'Europe sur le paysage / Site web officiel \(coe.int\)](#)

[Council of Europe Landscape Convention / Official website \(coe.int\)](#)

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I. STATE CONCERNED AND APPLICANT

1. State

Poland

Represented by

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2. Applicant

*Name of the local,
regional authority(ies)
or NGO(s)*

Spatial Planning Department, Kraków City Hall

☒ Local / regional authority project

☐ NGO Project

**Website of the Applicant (if
exists)**

Represented by

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II. PRESENTATION OF THE PROJET

3. Name of the Project

Resolution No. XXXVI/908/20 of the Krakow City Council of 26.02.2020 on establishing the “Principles and conditions of placing small architecture objects, billboards and advertising devices and fences” – the so-called Landscape Resolution.

4. Location of the Project

Kraków, Poland

5. Summary of the Project (10-12 lines)

The essence of the Landscape Resolution was to define the precise rules under which advertising, whether on buildings or free-standing media, would appear in the city landscape. Advertising banners have only been permitted for the duration of the construction work, but no longer than for one year and no more often than every seven years. Advertising on buildings - in principle - can be placed at the ground floor level of the building. Businesses are allowed to place up to five signs, except in zones where these rules are more restrictive. The Krakow Landscape Resolution also includes a catalogue of advertising media with standardised dimensions, such as billboards, poster and advertising poles, advertising panels and small advertising media, and sets out the conditions for their location. Another important issue was to regulate the rules for locating fences so that Krakow could be described as a city open to pedestrians, without creating closed enclaves. Hence the ban on fencing of multi-family dwellings, with the exception of backyard gardens. Kraków's residents in the new housing projects can finally use the estate spaces freely.

6. Photo representing the Project (high definition – JPEG 350 dpi) - author: Jakub Pogorzelski – Inicjatywa ŁADny Kraków



7. **Website of the Project** (*if exists*)

<https://www.bip.krakow.pl/uchwalakrajobrazowa>

III. CONTENT OF THE PROJECT

8. **Start of the Project** month year
The project must have been completed at least three years previously

9. **End of the Project** month year
The project must have been completed at least three years previously

10. **Partners**

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11. **Financing bodies**

Kraków City Hall

12. **Central aims of the Project**

*What are the main objectives of the project regarding landscape?
How does the project contribute to the implementation of the Convention at the national level or transnational level?*

- 1) establishing the terms and conditions for the placement of small architectural objects, billboards and advertising devices and fences in the area of the City of Krakow, their size, quality standards and types of construction materials they may be made of;
- 2) protection of the existing spatial structure, the traditions of the place, the existing valuable or historic buildings and urban layouts by establishing the principles and standards determining spatial harmony and order;
- 3) protection of the City's historically and culturally valuable scenic qualities;
- 4) respect for good neighbourliness, understood as preventing the degradation of public spaces and open spaces by landscaping, billboards and advertising devices and fences;

5) preventing the appropriation of public space by restricting the siting of billboards and advertising devices in public spaces.

The project provides for the implementation of Poland's obligations under the European Landscape Convention to establish and adopt policies aimed at landscape protection, management and planning. The project constitutes a benchmark in Poland as one of the first urban landscape resolutions. On the international level, however, Krakow, which is considered to be the most recognisable Polish city, supports the introduction of standards of landscape protection across Europe, not only for cultural heritage areas, but also for all urban areas, including residential, business or areas excluded from being built-up.

13. Type of the Project

Describe the nature/type of the project:

Does it focus on landscape protection and management, or does it involve landscape planning, or both?

Is the project related to specific measures or to a landscape public policy?

Is it implemented at a national level or a transnational level?

The Krakow Landscape Resolution covers both the protection and management of the landscape and its planning.

The resolution limits the number of outdoor advertisements (billboards, advertising boards, signboards, etc.) in urban space, protects natural and cultural heritage assets (through greater restrictions on the placement of advertisements in certain zones); further, it introduces restrictions on fences and small architecture to counteract the degradation of space, and divides the city into zones of varied arrangements depending on their values. The resolution is an act of local law and it affects the landscaping of the city.

14. Outcome

What are the effective and measurable results of the project on the landscape?

The clearing of Krakow's space of advertising began on 1 July 2020 together with the entry into force of the provisions of the Landscape Resolution, but the process of positive transformation was staggered. The greatest effects of the resolution occurred when the statutorily guaranteed adjustment period for non-compliant advertising media expired. With each passing month, more and more facades that had previously been covered up by advertising were uncovered, and advertising obscuring the panoramic view was removed. Importantly, the tidying up did not just affect the historic city centre; new standards were introduced throughout the city. Among others, the building of the former Forum Hotel, which for years had been covered up by large format sheets. Adverts were removed from fences, the blind walls of buildings or from green spaces. It was not just individual billboards that disappeared from the road lanes, but often whole clusters of them. Throughout Krakow, places previously known for their accumulation of ugly boards were revealing their new, prettier face. Reducing the multitude of advertising on exit streets and tidying up signs on facades was quickly noticed and appreciated by Krakow's residents.

IV. RESPECT OF THE CRITERIA OF THE ATTRIBUTION OF THE AWARD

15. Sustainable territorial development

Is the project part of a sustainable development policy?

Does it contribute to the enhancement of environmental, social, economic, cultural or aesthetic values of the landscape? How?

Has it successfully countered or posed a remedy to any pre-existing environmental damage or urban blight? How?

Does it respond to the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss? How?¹

The Landscape Resolution, as an act of local law, is an important tool for the implementation of the City's policy to improve the quality standards and aesthetics of public spaces with respect to the entire municipal area (excluding closed areas other than those established by the Minister responsible for transport). The subject of the regulation of the Landscape Resolution is the gabiness, quality standards and types of building materials, of which advertising media and advertising devices as well as fences and small architecture in the city may be made. The basis for such regulations was provided by the Act passed by the Sejm on 24 April 2015 on amending certain acts in connection with the strengthening of landscape protection tools". This law aims to protect the landscape through a comprehensive approach to hitherto scattered issues concerning this protection. The legislator, in explaining the need and purpose of issuing the law, indicated that, quote: "landscaping is of cultural, social, economic and political importance. A high quality landscaped landscape fosters culture, creates social ties, protects against exploitation, brings economic benefits and strengthens the country's political position." The need to ensure landscape protection and proper management also stems from the provisions of the European Landscape Convention ratified by Poland in 2005. According to Article 5 of this Convention, Poland is obliged, inter alia, to take measures for the legal recognition of landscapes, to establish and implement a landscape policy and to integrate landscapes into its own regional and urban planning policies, as well as other policies that directly or indirectly affect landscapes.

The Krakow Landscape Resolution rises to the challenges of climate change, environmental pollution and loss of biodiversity, primarily by limiting advertising chaos, reducing light emissions from advertising media through bans on the placement of energy-intensive luminous advertising media, and indirectly by promoting an improved quality of public space free of excessive advertising media. Additionally, its provisions impose a restriction on the construction of fences that impede the daily movements of residents of neighbourhoods or the migration of small animals. However, where fencing is allowed, the resolution specifies the requirements for fences, namely, they must not be solid ones and must be spaced by 20 cm every 10 metres to allow the migration of small animals.

¹ Appendix V to the Reykjavík Declaration

16. Exemplary value

Can the project be considered of exemplary value? Why?

Which are the good practices that it implemented? Which of these practices are considered of exemplary value at the national or transnational level?

Krakow and its landscape resolution can be an inspiration for many cities and towns, not only in Poland but across Europe, on how to effectively protect the landscape around us. The regulations adopted in the resolution were guided primarily by the requirements of spatial order protection. Thanks to the provisions contained in the resolution, the level of aesthetics of Krakow's space has increased, with elevations of historic buildings or valuable viewing axes being exposed. The fencing off of multi-family housing areas has also been prevented, which in multiple cases enables easier and faster movement of pedestrians in the city, whereas the requirements for spacing fences contribute to creating such conditions as would be conducive to the migration of small animals.

An innovative idea was to use the new technology to count advertising media on a dozen representative streets in Krakow. The inventory and analysis made by Dr Karol Kwiatek using a state-of-the-art mobile system illustrated the actual scale of the accumulation of advertisements in the city space, and also provided an answer to the question of how many of them did not meet the requirements proposed in the draft resolution. The conclusions of the consultation and analysis were of course used for further work.

17. Public participation

Does the project actively encourage the public's participation in the decision-making process? How?

Which stakeholders were involved, and how and when were they engaged? When did the active public consultation and dialogue take place, and in what form?

Is the project in line with the wider policies implemented by national, regional or local authorities?

The process of drafting the so-called Landscape Resolution included extensive public participation. The fencing off of multi-family housing areas has also been prevented, which in multiple cases enables easier and faster movement of pedestrians in the city, whereas the requirements for spacing fences contribute to creating such conditions as would be conducive to the migration of small animals.

Before this could happen, however, the project development team thoroughly analysed the opinions of local residents during a cross-programme public consultation. Information about the consultation went to the press, radio, television and the internet. Each stage of the work was accompanied by an information brochure. Many meetings were held with representatives of the media, the advertising sector and, of course, the residents. A survey was also conducted on the proposed solutions. Everyone was able to express an opinion on the very idea of the action taken. More than 3,000 such questionnaires were received.

In May and June 2016, additional public consultations were held as regards the concept of the resolution, during which residents had the opportunity to examine the model solutions. An exhibition was organised at the Municipal Dialogue Centre, where the initial proposal for solutions could be seen. The venue featured visualisations and mock-ups of the solutions on a real scale; meanwhile, the specialists working on the resolution answered numerous questions of concern to Krakow residents, learned about their points of view and explained the assumptions of the resolution.

The vast majority of Krakow's residents have repeatedly expressed their positive opinion on the need to tidy up the rules of situating advertising media, among others, by filling in questionnaires conducted during work on the resolution. Some residents also advocated for stricter provisions.

18. Awareness-raising

Is the project effectively increasing public awareness of the importance of landscape in terms of human development, consolidation of European identity, or individual and collective well-being? How?

Once the resolution came into force, the implementation of its findings began. The fight against advertising chaos has become a community-wide action. Enforcement officials widely informed by the residents themselves of the irregularities went into the field. Appropriate penalties were imposed on owners of media that did not comply with the resolution. City whistleblowers were active. Between January and July 2024, municipal whistleblowers submitted more than 1,100 requests to verify existing advertising devices. It is worth noting that a large proportion of the non-compliant advertisements were removed voluntarily by the owners. A website dedicated to the resolution has been launched to make it easy to read the regulations, also in a more accessible form. A leaflet has been produced - a vademecum on the new document. With the help of the app, it is possible to pre-check whether a sign complies with the resolution. An interactive form has also been created to easily report information about media that do not comply with the provisions of the resolution.

V. ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

Together with the printed version of the Application form, additional material in digital format should be included in one USB key, and returned by post to:

*Secretariat General of the Council of Europe
Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law (DG I)
Directorate of Social Rights, Health and Environment
Department for the Reykjavík Process and Environment
Council of Europe Landscape Convention
9th Session of the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe
F-67075 STRASBOURG, Cedex*

- Text (20 pages max.): *PDF format*
- Photos (10 max.): *JPEG 350 dpi high definition*
- Posters (2 max.): *PDF format high definition or JPEG 350 dpi high definition*
- Video (5 min max.): *mpeg 2 format - It is recommended to present a video (even of amateur quality).*

Jolanta Czyż