LANDSCAPE AWARD OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE
3rd session

UTENA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

Project
„U-PARKS. U-TURN WE LOVE“
Where is Utena ???

[Map showing the location of Utena in Lithuania]
Utena parks project was awarded with the National Landscape Award in 2012

The National rules governing the landscape award were prepared and adopted in 2007

First competition was organized in 2008, second in 2012, next one is planned in 2016

The National award is conferred in even year
The selection of the project

In 2012 the winner was selected from 29 localities, which were presented by 27 candidates.

The candidates were:
– 13 local municipalities;
– 3 Directorates of protected areas;
– 3 communities;
– 3 public institutions;
– 2 individual personnes;
– 2 companies;
– 1 school.
Candidates for the National Award submitted applications on 5 different groups of landscapes:

• Landscape of protected areas – 5 localities
• Landscape of villages – 2 localities
• Landscape of water bodies territories and their environment – 5 localities
• Landscape of recreational territories – 14 localities
• Landscape of urban territories – 3 localities
National Landscape Award 2012
Landscape of water bodies territories and their environment – 5 localities

Karst lakes of Kirkilai

Riverside of the river Sventoji
Landscape of recreational territories (resorts, zones of recreation, parks, forest parks) – 14 localities

Recreational zone in resort locality of Ignalina

Park in Smalininkai
Landscape of urban territories – 3 localities

Old town territory of Jurbarkas town

The square in Zarasai town
## Outcomes of the National Award

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<th>Paragraph</th>
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<td>The possibility to enjoy high quality National landscapes of different types was given.</td>
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<td>The methods of different types of landscape management were presented (protection, management, restoration, renewal, transformation).</td>
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<td>The experience how society can influence on changes of they landscapes was spread.</td>
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<td>The exhibition representing the best landscape management projects was prepared and presented to the municipalities.</td>
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<td>Active participation in the competition of National Landscape Award convinces that Lithuanian people are not indifferent about the quality of landscape. Lithuania can be proud of having examples of good landscape management all over the country.</td>
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Our winner – Utena district Municipality
Project „U-PARKS. U-TURN WE LOVE“

Some history and facts:

- Utena settlement is has counted 754 years, population of the city is 28 000 in 2012.
- There are 2 lakes and 4 valleys of small rivers.
- During the period of Soviet Union the city has changed and in 1970-1990 became the center of industry of the Eastern region of Lithuania.
- Industrial town area was enlarged and exceeded former city territory several times.
- The quality of landscape was not controlled enough at that time.
- The land restitution and privatization processes complicated the planning system.
For Lithuanian people the name of Utena associates with:

- **Lakes** — Utena is the regional centre of Eastern Lithuania – there are about 1 thousand lakes in this region (Utena district has 185 lakes, forests cover about 29 % of the area)

- **Traditional horse race**

- **Tasty beer**

- **Good quality knitwear**

But the city have never been recognized for its high quality living environment and exemplary development of green spaces.
Green surrounding region.....
....and industrial areas in the city (about 1970-1980)
The parks of Utena are formed on the steep slopes of the valleys of the rivers and wet, marshy shores of the lakes. Having not even one developed and adopted for people needs park, Utena district municipality during the period of eight years has completely designed and implemented 4 parks.

Abandon, full of rubbish, overgrown with low value shrubs green spaces were transformed into places of recreation and entertainment.

**The project is long continuous work:**
1. Dauniskis park (from 2005)
2. Vyžuona park (from 2010)
3. City garden park (from 2005)
4. Krašuona river residential areas (from 2009)
Utena project „U-parks. U-turn we love“ What is so special about it?
First – Utena stands out from other towns because in manufacturing city the new green spaces are in perfect harmony with the industrial areas.

Second – the actions of landscape protection, management and maintaining are long lasting and cover whole town area.

Third – project has been implemented primarily in respect of public needs and in consultation with the community.

Fourth – the project effectively increased the public’s awareness of the importance of landscape.
The main goals of the Project were:

to protect the general structure of the landscape and the ecological network in the town;

to enhance aesthetic and recreational potential of the natural landscape and create high quality recreational areas;

to sustain accessibility to the main landscape values for all citizens and visitors;

to improve quality of water;

to build new connections and enhance better communication between the different parts of the city and the people;

to raise the quality of living spaces;

to improve the image of the town and the general climate for investment.
BEFORE and AFTER
Vyžuona park (2010)
The project started in 2002 and continued till 2010.

About 8.7 million Euros, have been invested in the parks. The strongest finance support was given by European Union funds.

More than 7 km of lighted paths were created, 12 new bridges were built, drainage system installed in 10 ha, parkings, playgrounds, swimming places, water treatment installations were created, etc.

Now Utena has 50 ha of developed parks and is planning 2 new parks – the actions are long lasting and cover the whole town area.

15 permanent jobs were created, during high season up to 25 people are working.
**Achievements:**

Best landscape architects of the Republic of Lithuania have highlighted the idea, that landscape is a common good and everyone is responsible for it.

With the changes of landscape, change of culture of participation in the decision making process changed too. The new parks (Vyžuonaičio and Krašuona) development projects were initiated in 2010 by the residents of surrounding areas; they are active participants in the process of planning and designing.

The prestige of the city has changed. The prices of the real estate have increased. Utena became a city where it is good to live in.

Young people don’t want to leave or emigrate from Utena any more.
Future plans
Landscapes values for citizens and visitors
The most important people for project success:

Giedre Guodiene - chief desk officer of the Ministry of Environment

Alvydas Katinas – mayor of Utena municipality

Jurate Paragyte – landscape architect of Utena municipality
GREEN CITY – A HAPPY CITY

We invite you to sense the spirit of this city by watching a film about Utena parks

Enjoy it!