



FLORENCE CONVENTION

25th Anniversary of the Council of Europe Landscape Convention

28 October 2025

Florence, Italy

Villa Medicea “La Petraia”

Ministerial Conference

REPORT

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. The Ministerial Conference marking the 25th anniversary of the Council of Europe Landscape Convention took place on 27 and 28 October 2025 in Florence, Italy. Organised by the Council of Europe and the Ministry of Culture of Italy, the event gathered Ministers, senior officials and invited stakeholders to reflect on 25 years of progress in landscape protection, management and planning, and to consider how the Convention's principles can be further adapted to address emerging challenges and future priorities.
2. The event followed the [12th Conference](#) on the implementation of the Landscape Convention, held in Strasbourg on 28 - 29 October 2024, which marked a relaunch of the Convention and provided renewed direction for its future development. The 12th Conference reviewed achievements, challenges and good practices, and reaffirmed the commitment of the States Parties to cooperation and shared learning.
3. Building on this renewed momentum, the Ministerial Conference provided a platform for high-level exchanges on the role of landscape policies in achieving sustainable development and democratic governance, and for reaffirming political commitment to the objectives of the Convention.
4. Following the opening of the Conference, two thematic sessions were held, bringing together Ministers and high-level representatives to reflect on the Convention's achievements, assess current challenges, and explore opportunities for future landscape protection in a changing world, in line with the Reykjavík Declaration.
5. Discussions underlined the Convention's continued relevance in promoting efficient management of all landscapes, including pristine, everyday and degraded, and in contributing to responses to environmental challenges such as pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss, as highlighted in the [Reykjavík Declaration](#). They also reflected the objectives of the [Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment](#), which recognises landscape as an essential component of people's surroundings and of their shared cultural and natural heritage, and highlighted the role of landscape policies in supporting environmental stewardship, cultural values, quality of life and social cohesion.
6. The Ministerial Conference took place in a broader European and international context marked by increasing environmental pressures and societal transformations, reinforcing the need for integrated, and participatory approaches to policy-making. In this context, the Landscape Convention was recognised as a key instrument for addressing complex territorial challenges through cooperation, shared responsibility and democratic engagement.
7. Discussions also highlighted the progressive expansion of the Landscape Convention through new accessions, reflecting its continued attractiveness and relevance for an increasing number of States. This enlargement has strengthened the Convention's role as a shared reference framework for landscape governance in Europe, while also extending its influence beyond the European context through dialogue, cooperation and exchange with international partners. Looking ahead, the Conference underlined the importance of consolidating this dynamic by supporting effective implementation, reinforcing visibility and ensuring that the Convention continues to inspire innovative and landscape-sensitive approaches to territorial challenges in a changing world.

OPENING SESSION

Minister of Culture of Italy, Mr Alessandro Giuli

8. The Conference was opened by Mr Alessandro Giuli, Minister of Culture of Italy, who welcomed participants and recalled the relevance of hosting the event in Florence, where the Landscape Convention was originally opened for signature in 2000.
9. The Minister highlighted the rapid social, economic and environmental transformations affecting European landscapes and emphasised the responsibility of governments to safeguard environmental balance and promote adaptive and forward-looking landscape policies. He underlined that landscapes are not merely natural settings but “living projections” of cultural identity, shaped by history and human aspiration. Ensuring their protection, management and planning is therefore essential for the well-being of present and future generations.
10. He stressed that all landscapes deserve attention, and noted the importance of regeneration efforts, including in areas affected by industrial decline. Referring to Italy's constitutional principles and recent constitutional reforms on environmental protection, the Minister highlighted the importance of an approach to development that regenerates rather than consumes, and that balances heritage and innovation.
11. Minister Giuli recalled the relevance of the Reykjavík Declaration, which recognises a healthy environment as essential to human rights, and linked landscape protection to broader challenges such as pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss. He called for a shared commitment to building “dynamic landscapes” capable of responding to contemporary transitions while preserving cultural identity.

Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr Bjørn Berge

12. Deputy Secretary General Mr Bjørn Berge recalled the signing of the Landscape Convention in Florence, a city famous for its architectural and cultural heritage and recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage site. He emphasised that while Florence exemplifies outstanding landscapes, all landscapes, hold deep value, shaping communities, ways of life, and individual experiences. He noted that 41 of 46 member states have ratified the Convention - reflecting a strongly participatory model that integrates community contributions and shared responsibilities.
13. Mr Berge underlined the Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment and the Reykjavík Summit Declaration, noting that a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment is integral to human rights. He referred to the [Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law](#), which will open for signature on 3 December 2025 and establishes offences relating to a broad range of actions that unlawfully destroy the environment. He stressed the need for continued cooperation to integrate landscape protection across all levels, throughout Europe and beyond.

Vice President of the Council of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Mr Antonio Tajani, (statement read by Mr Clemente Conestabile, Diplomatic Advisor), Italy

14. Vice President Antonio Tajani's statement emphasised that landscape lies at the heart of Italy's strategy for growth and international relations, contributing to well-being, development, and the promotion of national excellence, exports, and innovative investment, particularly in the tourism sector, a key driver of employment and social cohesion.
15. Highlighting initiatives to boost tourism in small towns and support major sporting events such as the Milan-Cortina Winter Olympics, Mr Tajani stressed that protecting Italy's landscapes requires cooperation between institutions, local authorities, and civil society to enhance the visibility and value of local areas worldwide.

Minister of the Environment and Energy Security of Italy, Mr Gilberto Picchetto Frattin,

16. In his pre-recorded statement, Mr Gilberto Pichetto Fratin, Minister of the Environment and Energy Security of Italy, emphasised that landscapes are a shared resource and a central element of European identity, crucial for sustainable development and the rights of citizens. He underlined the importance of developing strategies to address the complex challenges facing communities today, including climate change, biodiversity loss, rural depopulation, and environmental degradation, as well as their impacts on cultural heritage and key natural resources such as forests, waterways, and glaciers.
17. Minister Pichetto Fratin highlighted Italy's integrated approach, which seeks to incorporate landscape considerations across all public policies - from town and land planning to energy production, sustainable agriculture, and responsible tourism. He pointed to concrete initiatives, such as the *National Charter for the Landscape*, regional landscape plans, and the creation of ecological networks that connect local and national conservation efforts, demonstrating effective cooperation between landscape and environmental authorities. He also stressed the role of renewable energy in protecting landscapes while supporting food security, safety, and the transition to a low-carbon economy. He reaffirmed that landscapes are essential for the economic, social, and cultural future of local communities and must be actively protected, restored, and enhanced to ensure the well-being for all.

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, represented by Ms Aurora Floridia, Senator of the Italian Republic

18. Senator Aurora Floridia, representing the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, highlighted the enduring relevance of the Landscape Convention, noting that Florence, as a symbol of culture, art, and European values, embodies the shared principles supporting the Convention. She emphasised that all landscapes are equally valuable and that their enhancement is both a democratic and environmental duty. Linking her remarks to the Reykjavík Declaration, she underlined the urgency of addressing the triple planetary crisis and stressed the Council of Europe's role in promoting a healthy environment as a fundamental human right, with the Florence Convention providing a tangible framework for action.
19. Senator Floridia presented the work of the Parliamentary Assembly's working group on a healthy environment, which she chairs, highlighting its focus on advancing the legal right to live in a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment. She called on member States and national parliaments to integrate this principle into their legislative and policy frameworks. She emphasised that landscape and environmental policies are closely connected, with healthy landscapes serving both to ensure communities' well-being and social inclusion,

and as a practical expression of democracy, allowing citizens to have a voice in decisions that affect the places where they live. Senator Floridia further stressed that safeguarding landscapes reinforces community cohesion and local economies, promotes sustainable tourism and agriculture, and enhances resilience, demonstrating that environmental protection and economic development are mutually reinforcing objectives of a green and just transition.

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, represented by the President Mr Mark Cools

20. Mr. Mark Cools, President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, highlighted the central role of the Florence Convention in shaping Europe's recognition of the value of landscapes. He recalled that the Congress played a founding role in initiating the Landscape Convention, which recognises landscapes as a "living fabric" connecting people, nature, and culture, and as an essential part of European identity and daily life. Emphasising the importance of local and regional authorities, he noted that communities are at the heart of landscape protection, implementing innovative and inclusive policies that balance development with preservation while engaging citizens in decision-making.
21. The president of Congress emphasised that landscapes are local by nature and shaped by the communities who live in them. He noted that they face increasing pressures from urbanisation, climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss, affecting both urban and rural areas. He underlined that supporting local governance is key to strengthening resilience and capacity in the face of these challenges, and that landscapes are a vital component of environmental management at the local level. Concluding, he called for renewed cooperation, creativity, and commitment to protect, plan, and manage Europe's landscapes, ensuring that the principles of the Florence Convention continue to guide sustainable and inclusive local development.

SESSION I: 25 YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE FLORENCE CONVENTION

22. The first session, building on the Reykjavík Declaration and the Council of Europe's Strategy on the Environment, focused on strengthening landscape action in response to the triple planetary crisis of pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss. It highlighted the Council of Europe's work to address environmental threats that undermine human rights, democracy and the rule of law, followed by interventions from ministers and heads of delegation, who shared national experiences and current developments in their countries.

Chair of the 13th Conference on the Implementation of the Landscape Convention, Ms Marta Rodrigues

23. In her opening remarks Ms Rodrigues recalled the Convention's transformative vision, whereby landscape, shaped by human perception, are relevant to all territories and contributes to identity, well-being and environmental integrity. She emphasised Landscapes living and adaptable nature, and the role of public authorities and communities in shaping them.

24. She highlighted achievements including coherent national policies, transboundary cooperation, links between landscape and public health, integration into biodiversity conservation, cross-sectoral spatial planning, and increased public awareness. She also noted that the 25th anniversary celebrations, held across the States Parties, demonstrate the Convention's enduring relevance.

SAN MARINO¹ - Minister for Territory and the Environment, Agriculture, Civil Protection and Relations with the Autonomous State Agency for Public Works, Mr Matteo Ciacci

25. Minister Ciacci highlighted the Convention's transformative role in placing people and quality of life at the centre of territorial management, integrating environmental protection, culture, democratic participation, and human rights within a sustainable development approach. He stressed that San Marino is fully committed to strengthening its territorial policies, promoting the redevelopment of historical centres and rural areas, public participation in decision-making, and ecological restoration programmes addressing biodiversity, resilience, and climate change.
26. Minister Ciacci underlined that the Landscape Convention provides a common framework for cooperation beyond national borders, fostering democratic participation and recognising the cultural, educational, and identity value of landscapes. San Marino, engaging its 30,000 inhabitants in decision-making processes, seeks to actively promote inclusive and innovative landscape policies that use cultural and natural heritage to foster well-being and social cohesion. He noted that protecting landscapes is not only an environmental objective but a matter of identity and freedom, citing the UNESCO-recognised Historical Centre of San Marino and Mount Titano as exemplary cases.

AZERBAIJAN - Deputy Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources, Ms Umayra Taghiyeva

27. Ms Taghiyeva, highlighted Azerbaijan's active participation in the Landscape Convention. She noted the country's efforts to align national landscape policies with the Convention's goals, including sustainable land use, green cities, and the protection of biodiversity and cultural heritage, with a particular focus on the ecological restoration of the *Karabakh* and Eastern *Zangazur* regions, which are becoming examples of green recovery and resilience.
28. The Deputy Minister highlighted three guiding principles reflected in Azerbaijan's recent environmental initiatives: inclusivity, local participation, and integration. Examples include the [Friends of the COP29 Presidency Network](#), the [Baku work plan for indigenous peoples and local communities](#), and the "Rio Trio" partnership between the Rio Conventions², ensuring that diverse voices and expertise are included in climate and landscape action.
29. Ms Taghiyeva concluded by emphasising the importance of these principles for the future of the Landscape Convention and Azerbaijan's renewed commitment to international cooperation. She also announced that Azerbaijan will host [World Environment Day 2026](#) and the [World Urban Forum 2026 in Baku](#), inviting participants to join these events.

¹ The order of interventions in this report follows the consolidated list of Statements per delegation

² The "Rio Conventions" refer to the international agreements adopted at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro) to address global environmental challenges: the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

HUNGARY - Ministry of Agriculture, Deputy State Secretary, Dr Oszkár Ökrös

30. Dr Oszkár Ökrös emphasised that in Hungary, the protection, management, and planning of landscapes involve local communities, with initiatives such as nature parks and [UNESCO Global Geoparks](#) serving as effective tools to preserve landscape values, biodiversity, and natural heritage, while promoting local cooperation and engagement.
31. Dr Ökrös underlined the importance of research in supporting sustainable landscape management. Hungary has developed a [national methodology for identifying landscape character types](#), resulting in detailed mapping that informs land use planning aligned with natural features. He also noted that the [national landscape strategy](#) approved for the period 2017 – 2026, translates the Convention's principles into national policy by promoting awareness and responsibility towards landscapes, encouraging sustainable land use, and strengthening cooperation at the local, national, and international levels.

LATVIA - Deputy State Secretary for Regional Development, Ms Ilze Oša

32. Since ratifying the Convention in 2007, Latvia has implemented its principles through national planning, research, and institutional cooperation. The *Landscape Policy Implementation Plan* promotes landscape quality via collaboration between national institutions, municipalities, and communities. The recently established *Landscape Management Coordination Council* enhances inter-institutional coordination, while the launch of the *Digital Latvian Landscape Atlas in 2024* provides a data-driven tool to support evidence-based decision-making, raise awareness, and empower local authorities. In coastal and marine areas, Latvia is developing approaches that balance environmental protection, sustainability, and public access, showing that landscapes extend beyond land to include both terrestrial and marine environments.
33. Ms Oša emphasised that public involvement is at the heart of Latvia's approach. Initiatives such as "*Landscape Treasures*" highlight local identity and ensure that community perspectives are included in shaping the country's cultural and natural heritage. Looking forward, Latvia supports a stronger focus on diverse landscapes, knowledge sharing, digital innovation, and continued community participation. She emphasised that these priorities would help put the Convention's vision into practice in daily life in her country.

ESTONIA - The Ambassador of Estonia to the Italian Republic, Mr Lauri Bambus

34. The Ambassador emphasised the importance of both natural and cultural landscapes, highlighting Estonia's species-rich wooded meadows as an example of how ecological, historical, and cultural values can be integrated. He noted that the Landscape Convention has remained highly relevant over the past 25 years, especially in addressing the biodiversity and climate crisis, where landscape degradation and unsustainable land use are key drivers.
35. Mr Bambus highlighted the Convention's achievements in producing thematic guidance, promoting knowledge exchange, and recognising exemplary projects through the Landscape Award sessions. He also emphasised the need for the Convention to remain strong and actively contribute to tackling biodiversity and climate challenges.

ARMENIA - Urban Development Committee, Deputy Chairman, Ms Nune Petrosyan

36. Ms Petrosyan highlighted Armenia's strong commitment to the Landscape Convention since joining in 2004. She noted that participation in the Convention is a continuous process and emphasised the importance of expert exchanges through groups such as a Group of Experts on *Landscape, a Living Environment* in shaping inclusive and sustainable landscape policies. She also informed the participants that Armenia will participate in the 9th Session of the Landscape Award by presenting a national exemplary project aligned with the Convention's principles.
37. Deputy Chairman outlined Armenia's progress in integrating the Convention's principles into national legislation and planning practices. Over the past five years, comprehensive development programmes have been prepared, addressing land-use regulation, climate change mitigation, and the rehabilitation of degraded landscapes. She also highlighted the publication of [Landscape Convention for Kids](#) in 2022, an educational booklet for primary schools developed in cooperation with the Council of Europe Secretariat. Further efforts include aligning construction standards with European Union criteria and renovating housing and public buildings to improve energy efficiency, safety, and integration with surrounding landscapes.
38. Looking ahead, Armenia aims to develop a *national settlement development plan* to guide sustainable territorial development across the country. This framework will integrate landscape-sensitive approaches, protect cultural and natural heritage, and improve quality of life. Ms Petrosyan stressed the importance of maintaining a balanced relationship between natural and built environments through continued cooperation and shared responsibility.

POLAND - General Director for Environmental Protection of Dr Piotr Otawski

39. The Head of the Polish delegation explained how landscape policy in Poland is implemented at the national, regional, and local levels, under the shared responsibility of the Ministry for Climate and Environment, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, and the Ministry of Development and Technology. He highlighted the adoption of 2015 legislative amendment strengthening the implementation of the Landscape Convention, which introduced new tools for landscape protection, including *municipal landscape resolutions regulating advertisements, small architectural elements, and fences*. These measures have significantly improved the quality and aesthetics of public spaces, notably in the historic city of Kraków.
40. He also noted the introduction of mandatory "landscape audits", carried out by regional authorities at least once every 20 years, to identify and assess landscapes and designate priority areas of particular value to society. Both instruments are developed at the regional and local levels with full public participation. He concluded that while these tools have strengthened the integration of landscape protection into spatial and development policies, the key challenge remains raising awareness among local communities of the importance and value of landscapes.

SLOVENIA - Ministry of Natural Resources and Spatial Planning of, Ms Nataša Bratina

41. Ms Bratina recalled that Slovenia ratified the Landscape Convention in 2003, building on earlier national efforts in landscape policy. Even prior to ratification, Slovenia had developed its first *national landscape inventory* in 1998, laying an important foundation for later landscape policy development. Slovenia subsequently received a special mention

through the [Council of Europe Landscape Award in 2008–2009](#) for its long-standing and systematic approach to landscape identification and policy. This framework was revised in 2024 to improve accessibility through digital tools and to update analyses of landscape character and key drivers of change.

42. Ms Bratina noted Slovenia's contributions to the implementation of the Convention, including the awareness-raising project "*We Are Making Our Landscape*" and the development of a *National landscape policy*, currently in its final adoption phase. She also recalled that Slovenia hosted the 4th Council of Europe Landscape Conference in 2006.
43. She stressed that landscape quality is increasingly linked to human well-being and should be systematically integrated into all sectoral policies that shape or affect landscapes. While this integration is more advanced in areas such as spatial planning, nature conservation, cultural heritage, and forestry, it remains limited in other sectors. Looking ahead, Ms Bratina highlighted the growing pressures on landscapes from natural disasters, and demographic change, demonstrated by recent examples of forest fires and floods in Slovenia. She underlined the need for more resilient landscapes and better coordination between sectoral policies, in line with the Convention's principles, to support prevention, adaptation, and the long-term quality of landscapes.

PORTUGAL - Deputy Director of the Directorate General for Territory, Economy and Territorial Cohesion, Ms Ana Seixas

44. Ms Seixas highlighted Portugal's rich and diverse landscapes, shaped over time by both nature and human activity, and deeply connected to the country's history, culture, and identity. She recalled emblematic examples such as the transformation of the *Douro Valley* through knowledge and economic activity, illustrating how landscapes evolve through the interaction between people and place. She also highlighted Portugal's recognition as the winner of the [8th Session of the Council of Europe Landscape Award](#) in 2024 for the project *Villages of Serra da Lousã – Where Villages Sound Unique*.
45. Ms Seixas outlined Portugal's sustained commitment to landscape policy, notably through the *National Landscape Prize* launched in 2012, the adoption of the [National Architecture and Landscape Policy](#) in 2015, and the creation of cross-sectoral partnerships integrating landscape into spatial planning, agriculture, water management, nature conservation, and tourism. She emphasised education and public participation, including annual national conferences and school programmes promoting landscape awareness. More recently, under the EU Resilience Plan, Portugal has launched a nationwide *Landscape transformation programme* targeting vulnerable forest areas to improve resilience to climate change and wildfires, with strong involvement of local stakeholders and private landowners. She concluded her intervention by reaffirming that landscapes are living assets for Portugal's future.

SWEDEN - Swedish National Heritage Board, Department of Cultural Environment, Ms Marja-Leena Pilvesmaa

46. Ms Marja-Leena Pilvesmaa recalled its early engagement with the Landscape Convention, signed in 2001 and ratified in 2010, and highlighted the coordinating role of the Swedish National Heritage Board in its implementation. She underlined the coordinated national implementation of the Convention in cooperation with regional authorities, the [Sámi Parliament](#) and several national agencies, noting in particular its contribution to a more

holistic approach to landscape policy and planning reflected in Swedish legislation. Addressing current challenges, she drew attention to large-scale landscape transformations linked to renewable energy development and stressed the importance of existing protection systems in balancing change with long-term landscape values. She also emphasised the need to better recognise and understand marine landscapes, especially the Baltic Sea, whose cultural and natural heritage remains insufficiently explored.

SWITZERLAND - Federal Office for the Environment (OFEV), Division of Biodiversity and Landscape, Ms Claudia Moll Simon

47. Ms Claudia Moll Simon underlined that a clear and dedicated landscape policy is essential for effective landscape protection, management and planning, as it reflects the importance of landscapes for society. She stressed that at the same time that such a policy must go further by ensuring the systematic integration of landscape considerations into all sectoral policies with direct or indirect impacts on landscape, in line with Article 5 of the Convention and the [Lausanne Declaration \(2020\)](#). She presented the [Swiss Landscape Concept](#), in place since 1997 and revised in 2020, as a key federal planning instrument defining strategic goals and landscape quality objectives across 13 policy areas, from agriculture and spatial planning to transport and national defense. Emphasis was also placed on awareness-raising and communication, noting that many stakeholders are not always fully aware of their role and responsibility in shaping landscapes.

CZECH REPUBLIC - Ministry of the Environment (Department of Adaptation to Climate Change), Ms Júlia Tóbiková

48. Ms Júlia Tóbiková, representing the Czech Republic, conveyed the apologies of the Minister of the Environment, who was unable to attend due to other official commitments. She recalled the Czech Republic's long tradition of landscape protection, with legislation recognising the value of natural and cultural landscapes for over a century. Since ratifying the Convention in 2004, the Czech Republic has progressively integrated its principles into national policies, including spatial planning, climate change adaptation, and regional and cultural development. She highlighted the inclusion of the Convention's concepts in the [Act on Spatial Planning](#) and the use of territorial landscape studies as practical tools supporting multidisciplinary and participatory planning.
49. Ms Tóbiková also announced the preparation of a new *National Landscape Policy*, intended to further strengthen the implementation of the Convention and address current challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss and sustainable land use. She reaffirmed the Czech Republic's commitment to the core values of the Florence Convention, including cooperation across borders and disciplines, respect for both everyday and exceptional landscapes, and the involvement of all people living in and shaping landscapes.

FRANCE - Ministry for Ecological Transition (Directorate of Housing, Urbanism and Landscapes), Ms Émilie Fleury-Jägerschmidt

50. In her intervention, Ms Fleury-Jägerschmidt underlined the particular relevance of the Landscape Convention for France, notably in the context of the [Paris Agreement](#), and highlighted its international dimension as a key support for public policies addressing ecological transition and enhancing the well-being of populations.

51. The delegate recalled that France played an active role in the development of the Landscape Convention and that its principles helped to structure a coherent national landscape policy. Since 1993, French legislation has recognised landscape as an essential component of the living environment, cultural and natural heritage and identity. The Convention enabled France to consolidate previously fragmented provisions and to integrate landscape into sectoral policies, positioning it as a structuring and operational instrument for the sustainable management and planning of territories.
52. The representative emphasised that public participation constitutes a crucial entry point for the successful implementation of the full range of commitments under the Landscape Convention. The acceptance of new transition models is conditioned by the active engagement of local populations. She highlighted the importance of fostering democratic involvement and awareness-raising, particularly with regard to everyday landscapes, and stressed the need to extend this reflection to larger-scale landscapes by further promoting transboundary cooperation.

SESSION II: FUTURE OF THE FLORENCE CONVENTION

53. The second session of the Conference was opened by Mr Rafael Benitez, Director of Social Rights, Health and Environment of the Council of Europe. He invited delegations to reflect on the role of landscape-based policies in responding to current global challenges highlighting the added value of the Council of Europe. He underlined the need for integrated and innovative approaches to landscape protection, management and planning, linking environmental sustainability, cultural heritage and sectoral policies, and stressed the importance of addressing the triple planetary crisis of pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss while safeguarding human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

GREECE - Minister of Culture, Dr Lina Mendoni

54. The second session of the Conference opened with a statement by Minister Lina Mendoni, who described the Convention as one of Europe's most visionary treaties. She underlined its role in redefining landscape as a common good at the heart of quality of life, democracy and cultural heritage, and highlighted its unique contribution to forging an inseparable link between environment and culture.
55. Minister Mendoni explained Greece's approach to implementing the Convention, highlighting the shared responsibility of the Ministry of Environment and Energy and the Ministry of Culture. She noted that *Greek archaeological law* ensures monuments and their surroundings are managed as a single, living entity, recognising that heritage cannot be preserved in isolation from its landscape. The same principle is applied in management plans for UNESCO World Heritage and [Natura 2000](#) sites. She stressed that today's global challenges of pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss, require not just protection, but the regeneration of landscapes, while integrating human rights, democracy, and the rule of law into environmental policy.
56. Looking to the future, Minister Mendoni highlighted three key priorities for the Convention:
- first, an integrated approach that connects culture, nature, and landscape across all policies;
 - second, innovation and participation, using digital mapping, landscape observatories, and participatory planning to empower local communities;

- and third, a focus on care and health, emphasising the connection between healthy landscapes and human well-being.

57. She underlined the Convention's dual role as both guardian of the past and architect of the future, ensuring that Europe's landscapes continue to inspire, sustain, and benefit the future generations.

CROATIA - Institute for Spatial Development, Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction and State Assets, director Mr Bojan Linardić

58. Mr Bojan Linardić highlighted its long-standing dedication to protecting landscapes, which was formally enshrined in national law in 2004 after the adoption of the Council of Europe Landscape Convention. Landscape management is integrated across physical planning, cultural and natural heritage protection, and environmental policy, with responsibilities shared among several ministries. Croatia faces growing pressures from climate change, natural disasters, uncontrolled urban expansion, illegal construction, and the decline of rural populations and traditional agricultural landscapes. To address these challenges, the Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction and State Assets developed the *National Landscape Framework (Basis)*, producing macro-regional and regional landscape atlases and establishing a consistent methodology for spatial management, cross-border cooperation, and awareness-raising among public authorities and professionals.

59. Mr Linardić reported that the Ministry of Culture and Media is developing digital conservation studies for 60 cultural-historical sites, analysing urban landscapes, and recommending protection measures. These resources, together with the National Landscape Framework, will be publicly accessible and support spatial planning, urban development, and other sectoral policies. Croatia also promotes public engagement through Landscape Day, International conferences, educational initiatives, and participation in the sessions of the Council of Europe Landscape Award. Croatian representative also highlighted the importance of sustainable and affordable housing, ensuring that new and transformed developments maintain high landscape quality and contribute to the well-being of all people.

SPAIN: Ministry of Culture, Directorate General of Cultural Heritage and Fine Arts, Director General, Ms Ángeles Albert de León

60. Ms. Albert de León highlighted the integral role of culture in understanding and managing landscapes, which combine ecological, cultural, and social dimensions. She stressed that landscape management must be multidisciplinary and consider both exceptional and everyday landscapes, with specific focus on urban areas, where 70 percent of population live. In Spain, this approach is reflected in policies that recognise landscapes as vital resources for the quality of life and the preservation of cultural identity.

61. Ms. Albert de León pointed to recent natural disasters, including flooding in Valencia and wildfires in León, as evidence of the fragility of landscapes and the need for effective risk management and regeneration strategies. Spain's *National Landscape Plan* includes protocols and tools for interventions in case of disasters, integrating principles of the Convention and the Reykjavík Declaration, emphasising education, professional training, awareness-raising, and dissemination of good practices. She highlighted the creation of renewable energy plans and strategies based on traditional knowledge as key examples

of how Spain adapts landscapes to modern challenges while preserving their cultural and ecological values.

62. Representative of Spain called for comprehensive strategies rooted in culture, affirming the Convention's essential role and the right to beauty, memory, and the future.

Council of Europe Multidisciplinary Group on the Environment (GME), Chair, Ambassador Maria Diamantopoulou

63. Chair of the Council of Europe Multidisciplinary Group on the Environment (GME), highlighted the GME's central role in preparing the Council of Europe's Strategy on the Environment (2025-2030), adopted by the Committee of Ministers in May 2023. The GME brought together representatives from all 45 member States, as well as input from Council of Europe institutions and international organisations, to ensure a multidisciplinary and holistic approach. The strategy aligns environmental protection with the Council of Europe's core values, emphasising that a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment is essential for the enjoyment of human rights.

64. The strategy provides guidance for the future implementation of the Landscape Convention, promoting sustainable landscape management, integrated land-use planning, and collaboration with local communities and stakeholders. Ambassador Diamantopoulou stressed the importance of public participation, human rights integration, and innovative approaches, including nature-based solutions and green infrastructure, to create resilient and sustainable landscapes. She also noted the [Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law](#), opened for signature in Strasbourg on 3 December, as a complementary tool supporting these objectives.

NETHERLANDS - Cultural Heritage Agency (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science), Head of Landscape Department, Mr Henk Baas

65. Mr Baas outlined the development of landscape policy and practice in the Netherlands over the past 25 years. Dutch approaches go beyond mere appreciation or preservation, focusing on understanding the character and dynamics of landscapes at national, regional, and local levels. The "past forward" approach draws on lessons from historical landscape use to guide contemporary changes, ensuring that new developments respect and enhance existing landscape qualities. In this densely populated country with limited space, a multi-level planning system balances the needs of housing, industry, agriculture, nature, and infrastructure, with landscape considerations are central to national planning strategies.

66. A key Dutch innovation is the use of "*landscape biographies*", integrated documents developed in collaboration with local communities and residents. These holistic tools serve to capture both the physical and social dimensions of landscapes, linking cultural and natural heritage with public perception and participation. Mr. Baas stressed that landscapes are not just collections of elements or protected sites - they are living environments shaped by human interaction, and their management requires interdisciplinary approaches, combining ecological, cultural, and social perspectives.

67. Looking ahead, the Netherlands is developing a *national landscape strategy* to address future challenges, including climate adaptation, water management, and cultural transitions. Mr. Baas emphasised that change is inevitable, but sustainable landscape

management must involve local communities, build on existing qualities, and balance multiple societal needs.

SERBIA: Ministry of Environmental Protection, Development and Planning of Ecological Network Protection, Independent Advisor, Mr Radislav Momirov

68. Mr Radislav Momirov reported on the ongoing implementation of the Landscape Convention within Serbia's national environmental and spatial planning framework. Since ratifying the Convention in 2011, the Ministry of Environmental Protection has worked to integrate landscape considerations into relevant legislation, policy instruments, and planning procedures. Efforts have focused on strengthening landscape governance, developing ecological networks, expanding protected areas, and incorporating landscape aspects into spatial planning and environmental assessment procedures at the national, regional, and local levels.

69. Particular attention has been given to the protection and sustainable management of cultural and natural landscapes of high heritage value, especially those linked to historical monuments, religious sites, and traditional land-use patterns. Serbia underlined the importance of preserving landscape identity and diversity as part of its national heritage, while ensuring continuity between conservation objectives and future development needs. These actions reflect a sustained commitment to implementing the principles of the Landscape Convention through concrete national measures and coordinated institutional efforts.

GEORGIA - Ambassador to Italy (on behalf of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia) Ms Tamara Liluashvili

70. Georgia reaffirmed its strong commitment to the principles of the Landscape Convention, and its transformative effect on national and local policies. Looking ahead, the representative of Georgia emphasised the Convention's role in fostering innovative, cross-sectoral solutions that connect landscape considerations with climate resilience, biodiversity conservation and sustainable rural development. Reference was made to the integration of landscape into spatial planning, environmental governance and cultural heritage policies. Ms Liluashvili underlined the value of the Convention's holistic approach in promoting balanced development that respects both people and nature, confirming its continued engagement through the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture.

ICCROM - Director-General, Ms Aruna Francesca Maria Gujral

71. The Director-General of ICCROM highlighted the Landscape Convention as a key instrument in promoting a holistic understanding of landscape as a living system essential to human well-being. She stressed that ICCROM fully supports this vision, grounded in the inseparable link between cultural and natural heritage.

72. She presented ICCROM's *Strategic Plan 2026 - 2031*, which is built around a new "vision of care" aimed at conserving, activating, and recognising the full potential of heritage in all its forms. This approach considers heritage as a dynamic and transformative force that strengthens communities, supports the planet, and enhances well-being. Through its programmes, ICCROM promotes people-centred and integrated natural and cultural approaches, supporting professionals and local communities in combining ecological

systems, traditional knowledge, and sustainable practices to foster social cohesion and economic development.

73. Looking ahead, she emphasised the need to reinforce links between landscape policies, climate action, and community resilience, and strengthen cooperation with other international frameworks, including the [World Heritage Convention](#), the [Paris Agreement](#), and the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030](#). Referring to Article 7 of the Convention, she reaffirmed ICCROM's readiness to work closely with the Council of Europe and its member states to translate policies into concrete actions.

Conference of INGOs - President, Mr Gerhard Ermischer

74. Mr. Ermischer highlighted the longstanding engagement of civil society with the Landscape Convention, reflecting the active role of INGOs in supporting its objectives. He emphasised the Convention's holistic approach, which integrates cultural and natural heritage, biodiversity, and social cohesion, and stressed the importance of collaboration between civil society, member States, and local communities to implement these principles effectively.
75. The President also stressed the importance of collaboration with member States and European institutions to implement the Convention's principles on the ground. He called for stronger support, including resources and coordination, to enhance participation, share good practices, and encourage all States - including the European Union - to fully engage with the Convention. Civil society, through the Conference of INGOs, stands ready to contribute, but success depends on political will, active cooperation, and the practical engagement of all States.

Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP) - Vice-Chair, Dr Anna Steiner

76. Dr. Steiner highlighted the Committee's role in overseeing activities related to culture, heritage, and landscape. The CDCPP³ guides the work of the Convention by shaping policy, promoting the integration of cultural and natural heritage, monitoring implementation, and supporting participatory approaches to ensure its effective application. She emphasised the growing recognition of the inseparable links between culture and nature and the need to integrate these connections into sustainable development and human well-being.
77. She also underlined the Committee's work on the new recommendations on "[Landscape and Health](#)" and "[Landscape, a Living Environment](#)," which stress the positive impact of landscapes on human well-being and their contribution to human rights and democracy. By promoting the close link between culture and nature, the CDCPP demonstrates an innovative interdisciplinary approach, integrating cultural, societal, and environmental objectives. Dr. Steiner reaffirmed that implementing the Convention is a participatory model of democracy in action.

CIVILSCAPE - Vice President Ms Inge Gotzmann

³ As of 1 January 2026, responsibilities for landscape-related work previously managed by the CDCPP have been transferred to the new Steering Committee on the Environment (CDENV).

78. Ms. Gotzmann highlighted the need for greater attention to intangible cultural heritage in landscape policy, emphasising that traditional knowledge and skills are vital for participation and democratic engagement. She noted that such landscape-related intangible heritage remains underrepresented in national and international heritage registers, including traditional meadow irrigation, dry-stone wall construction, and communal forest cooperatives, as exemplary models of sustainable practice. Civilscape called for greater recognition and support of these practices to safeguard the associated knowledge and skills, which are at risk of being lost. The representative also invited participants to the 25th European Landscape Forum on Spirituality and Landscape in Berlin and reaffirmed its commitment, as a Bonn-based NGO, to encouraging Germany and other countries to ratify the Landscape Convention.

Award Ceremony - European Diploma for Protected Areas

79. The award ceremony of the European Diploma for Protected Areas took place as part of the Ministerial Conference. The Diploma, awarded by the Committee of Ministers on 9 July 2025 for the Sierra Nevada National Park, Nature Park and Biosphere Reserve in Spain, was formally presented by Mr Bjørn Berge, to Mr Francisco de Asís Muñoz Collado, Director of the Park, in the presence of Ms Ángeles Albert de León and Mr Rafael Benitez. The ceremony highlighted the park's exceptional natural, cultural, and landscape values as well as its rich biodiversity. The award acknowledged the efforts of local communities, scientists, and managers in protecting both natural and cultural heritage of this exceptional site, reinforcing sustainable management, resilience, and the park's role as a model for conservation across Europe.

ADOPTION OF THE FLORENCE DECLARATION

80. The [Florence Declaration](#) was formally adopted by the participants of the Ministerial Conference. The declaration recognises the Council of Europe Landscape Convention as a key instrument for improving the quality of life, promoting democratic governance, and addressing environmental, social, and cultural challenges. It emphasises the importance of inclusive, multi-stakeholder participation in landscape policy, the integration of landscape into sectoral planning, and the safeguarding of cultural landscapes as part of Europe's shared heritage. The declaration also encourages the exchange of good practices, the use of nature-based solutions, and collaborative approaches to respond to current environmental challenges and support sustainable development.

CLOSING REMARKS

81. The Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr Berge, thanked the Italian authorities and participants for a productive Conference, highlighting the achievements of the Convention and the renewed shared vision for its future. He noted that the Convention advances the goals of the Reykjavík Summit and the Strategy on the Environment, stressing that landscape security is increasingly urgent amid pollution, climate change, biodiversity loss, and land degradation.
82. He called for both effective mitigation and adaptation measures in urban and rural landscapes, emphasising the need to harmonise cultural and natural heritage and to integrate landscape considerations into all levels of planning and policy. He concluded by underlining the importance of even closer cooperation to sustain this joint vision.

83. Minister Giuli thanked all participants for their contributions and commitment to landscape protection, emphasising that landscapes reflect the identity, social, and cultural capital of communities. He highlighted the shared commitment emerging from the Conference and the Florence Declaration toward dynamic landscape management that responds to daily challenges while respecting the “*genius loci*”⁴ of territories. He expressed gratitude to the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr. Bjørn Berge, and to the moderators, noting that the discussions would inform the further development of national and European landscape policies.
84. The Minister stressed the need to move beyond fatalism in addressing environmental challenges and called for a proactive shaping of landscapes for future generations. He encouraged preserving both material and immaterial aspects of landscapes, renewing the connection between people and their environment, and safeguarding the cultural, natural, and symbolic values of the land. Concluding the Conference, he invited participants to continue working collaboratively to ensure that landscapes flourish and remain a source of inspiration, well-being, and sustainability for generations to come.

⁴ From latin "spirit of the place", unique character and identity of a place, shaped by the interaction of natural features, human activity and cultural meanings.

APPENDIX I – PROGRAMME

09:20 - 09:50 | Arrival and registration of participants

09:50 – 10:00 | Family Photo for Heads of delegation

*The Conference will be moderated by **Mr Rafael BENITEZ**, Director of Social Rights, Health and Environment, Council of Europe*

10:00 – 10:30 | Opening session

- **Mr Alessandro GIULI**, Minister of Culture of Italy
- **Mr Bjørn BERGE**, Deputy Secretary General, Council of Europe
- **Mr Gilberto PICHETTO FRATIN**, Minister of the Environment and Energy Security of Italy (*pre-recorded statement*)
- **Ms Aurora FLORIDIA**, Senator of the Italian Republic, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
- **Mr Marc COOLS**, President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Council of Europe (*pre-recorded statement*)

10:30 - 11:45 | 25 Years of Achievements of the Florence Convention

Building on the Reykjavík Declaration adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, this session will address ways and means of strengthening landscape action in response to the triple planetary crisis of pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss.

- **Ms Marta RODRIGUES**, Chair of the 13th Conference on the Implementation of the Council of Europe Landscape Convention

Ministers will engage and exchange ideas on the milestones, achievements and impact of the Council of Europe Landscape Convention, including at the national level (Each intervention of the Ministers must be limited to 5 minutes, for other officials to 3 minutes)

11:45 - 12:00 | Coffee Break

12:00 - 13:30 | Future of the Florence Convention

Building on the conclusions of the previous session, in this session the Ministers will explore solutions, innovative approaches and the role of the Council of Europe Landscape Convention in light of the Reykjavík Declaration (Each intervention by the Ministers must be limited to 5 minutes, for other officials to 3 minutes)

- **Mr Gianluca SILVESTRINI**, Head *a.i.* of the Reykjavík Process and the Environment Department, Council of Europe

13:30 – 13:45 | Ceremony of Presentation of the European Diploma for Protected Areas

13:45 – 14:00 | Adoption of the declaration and the closing remarks

- **Mr Bjørn BERGE**, Deputy Secretary General, Council of Europe
- **Mr Alessandro GIULI**, Minister of Culture of Italy

14:00 – 15:30 | Official Lunch for Heads of delegation at Villa La Petraia

APPENDIX II – CONCEPT NOTE



T-FC (2025) CONF 3
E - Concept Note - N

APPENDIX III – FLORENCE DECLARATION



T-FC (2025) CONF 5
E - Florence Declaration

APPENDIX IV – LIST OF PARTICIPANTS



List of Participants
Ministerial Conference