LANDSCAPE
DEMOCRACY
SILVER JUBILEE YEARBOOK
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COLOFON

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25 years ago, on April 1989, ten professional landscape architects from all over Europe meet in Vilvoorde (Belgium) and decided to create the European Foundation for Landscape Architecture. It was a group of people who had witnessed, in 1948, the creation of the International Federation of Landscape Architects, and who believed that our way of perceiving and understanding the world – derived from our profession - could contribute to its development.

Since then we have grown as a Federation, opening the way for a wider, complex and richer Europe so that nowadays, 34 national associations are part of IFLA EUROPE, an organisation which promotes the profession of landscape architecture across all countries of the European Union and the broader European region, recognizing excellence in educational courses and promoting best practice operations in all member countries.

Such a willingness to be together backs up the Federation’s work throughout these years: it is the result of the conscientious and generous work of not only the members of the Executive Councils which have steered the Federation during this time, but of all the members that have actively helped in its organization. This is basically why IFLA Europe is rejoicing this year: thanks to the unceasing work of all our members - in all National Associations, in working groups, or simply dealing with their professional work in an exemplary fashion-, we have the privilege to celebrate IFLA Europe’s Silver Jubilee. Its aim is to show the rich complexity of the landscape mosaic characterising our work, which deals with nature and culture, and considers man and society the focus of its beliefs.

This book is the result of the Federation’s 25th General Assembly which took place in Oslo (Norway) in 2014. It was a most special event as it was too the 25th Autumn Conference of the Norwegian Association of Landscape Architects, Norway’s 200 anniversaries of its constitution and independence, plus fifteen years had passed since the European Landscape Convention had been signed in Florence. It was evident for these reasons that the core concept that tied everything together was to be Landscape Democracy.

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All of us living today are witnesses of a unique historical moment characterized by an exceptionally quick urbanization process, which has brought onwards an accumulative degradation of environmental values, introducing a new global configuration.

Traditionally, the tight integration which existed between individuals, social and political institutions and the –quite intangible- perception of belonging to a determined geographical area insured social cohesion. However in the 18th century, a massive migration from countryside to cities forever changed the historical links with the landscapes we dwell in.

In the last hundred years, the development of economic liberalism favoured housing en masse as its provision insured a continuous production which retro-fed the system. Since the 1980s onwards, the adjustment of the aforementioned model to world market economy gave way to neoliberalism, which in turn advocated the reduction of the State's role in economics. Its impact has been tremendous: cities have grown exponentially, environment has been ravaged, new institutional, administrative and commercial centres, as well as multinational building complexes, have asserted themselves everywhere.

Nevertheless, the current critical state of global affairs points towards the end of neo-liberalism: it is likely that we will see a new economic paradigm emerge within the next handful of years. Meanwhile, the consequences of this former model will lie heavily upon our landscapes -poverty, misery, lack of employment, precarious housing, social conflict, violence-, and are only likely to intensify with the unrelenting migration of people to cities and the continued liberalization and decentralization of global markets. Possibly, it will be one –if not the- greatest challenge we will encounter as landscape architects.

But regardless of the daunting nature of these challenges, it is within this panorama of change and uncertainty that we must elaborate our vision of tomorrow. We have the responsibility to translate common, social needs into policies and then into action. As landscape architects, we are able to set things into perspective; confront the situation and envision a new model of what we –society- would like to be.

Precisely these issues are the focus of the Resolution on Landscape Democracy which has been signed by IFLA EUROPE's 34 National Associations at our General Assembly in Oslo (Norway), in October 2015. We hope you find it useful to urge your authorities to develop a holistic vision beyond political borders, as all these scales need to meet in our work, favouring ecological integrity, economic development and social justice as in the examples that follow. Let us insure all of them remain at the core of our profession.
Landscape and democracy were chosen as a theme as a tribute to the 200 year celebration of the Norwegian constitution from 1814. The Constitution marked the end of about 400 years of Danish rule and the rebirth of Norway as an independent nation. Some of the themes for the seminar is touched upon below.

The massacre of young people at Utøya and the bombing government buildings in the centre of Oslo in 2011 shocked the nation. It increased the focus on democracy, and at the same time the focus on security against further acts of terror. The plan for the rebuilding of the Labour Party Youth's summer campsite has been going through many changes in the planning process as participation from the young was taken aboard. A democratic planning process has taken place.

There are many aspects in planning that calls for consideration for the right to landscape and democracy. In the Planning and Building Act public participation is mandatory and the right to voice an opinion when big changes to the landscape are planned is well established. However, research has shown that it does not necessarily always function well enough for all.

Public open space is also under threat both by privatization and by security measures against terrorism. Cities like Oslo make an effort to ensure better security without jeopardizing free access to public space and the beauty of the parks and squares. The directorate of Public Roads and the Directorate of Cultural heritage is cooperating in a project called National Streets and squares to highlight streets and urban open spaces that were important in the building of the nation. The museum at Eidsvoll with their historical park were the Constitution has been the centre for the 200 year celebration.

On the small scale the Norwegian Association of landscape architects is going through turbulent times. There is a proposal to make one organization together with the interior architects and the architects. This has caused much discussion among the members. It has been voted over twice without getting the necessary 2/3 of the votes. The conclusion is not yet drawn.

Gyda Grendstad,
IFLA EU Representative
LANDSCAPE DEMOCRACY

Landscape and democracy in Brussels

Belgische Vereniging Voor Tuinarchitecten
En Landschapsarchitecten, Belgium

Not so long ago, the notion concept of landscape and democracy was nonexistent in Belgium. Projects were commissioned to landscape architects, architects, urbanists or engineers by majors mayors and local politicians, with mainly the intention to have these projects ready just before elections. Citizens were not even recognized as user of public space and had only to be thankful that they were allowed to walk through public space.

"Today we realize that the landscape is too important to just give it in the hands of either some scientist(s) or politician(s)"
dixit Sainteny, Bocquel. Moreover, citizens got aware of the fact that they are users of the public space (and the landscape) and should have the right to an opinion and to participate in decisions about it. With the introduction of participation came a new era. For some, a welcome to the new century, for others a poisoned gift. We have to admit that until now different projects have been experimenting with participation, with various successes.

Recently, in the city center of Brussels a car free area was cleared. Although a positive change, this transformation was not achieved in a democratic manner. Since the mid `90s, politicians have been discussing on the issue of giving back the central boulevards to the pedestrians. Plans were made, but the project was never executed. A few years ago a professor-philosopher wrote a critical article in a local newspaper and called for an action of civil disobedience which concretized in an action 'picnic the streets'. Ironically, this was an action of an intellectual minority, but supported by local politicians in the run-up of new elections. After a few months the picnics were no more than a gathering of small groups of people. Since June 2015, less than half a year after the first intentions were announced, the streets are now car free. Today this new public space looks still like a street or boulevard, but a very diverse public has been attracted to use it. Sadly, there hasn't been any democratic process of participation and but there is still place for local voices in the planning and designing the freshly obtained public space.

Bruxelles Environnement/Leefmilieu Brussels is an administration that has since 2008 been actively working on green public space in Brussels with the aim to work out and get expertise into introduce public participation. One of the project, Carré Tillens, is a showcase of how participation can lead to a very fine project where all users contribute and benefit. The only important lesson on that process is that it takes time. To really evolve to democracy and landscape there's a need of good examples.

SILVER JUBILEE YEARBOOK

The landscape for the population

Czech Landscape Architects, Czech Republic

Landscape democracy in the context of practice in Czesc Republic is much focused on public participation for creation and maintenance of open public spaces, but as well on encouraging the people to use the landscape. The landscape is therefore a platform of events, either cultural or specific related to landscape architecture, to gather people for creation, manifestation and educational activities.

"Green ribbon" in the frame of the competition "Village of the year"
The Czesc Republic Landscape Architects Association became full IFLA member in 2009 with the main purpose to support the mutual professional cooperation with other disciplines, as well as promoting and improving the level of landscape architecture and its social status and reputation at home and abroad. Representants of the association are delagated to jury member of an annual competition for communities that maintain themselves the public spaces, organized by several ministiers jointly.

The jury is assessing such a communities that maintain their public spaces as a places of relaxation, meeting places and meeting the public and surrounding landscape while that maintaining the rural character of settlements including traditional alleys. An important element is youth education, with respect to the athmosphere of the landscape, as it is often involved in the design of such spaces.
Open gardens weekend

Every second weekend in June people are invited to visit open gardens and parks also the sites which normally are inaccessible, all they with additional program such as guided tours through gardens and parks, concerts, theatres and refreshment. The goal is to increase the knowledge and awareness of people about garden art, landscape architecture and parks, gardens and public spaces.

Landscape festival Prague

The festival takes place in a railway station and two other locations in Prague for professional architects and artists of more disciplines to exhibit, but also students and amateurs to present their works. Except the series of concerts, the program mostly contains meetings and public debates about the possibilities of creative transformation of public space in the Czech Republic.

People and Places

Over the years, the planning process in Denmark has changed in the direction of decision-making in a bottom-up approach. The people living, using and caring for a specific area are invited to take part in the development, change and upkeep public spaces; be it smaller public spaces in the city, larger recreational green areas or more rural areas with historic value. It has become acknowledged that to create successful projects it is important to listen to local knowledge and to generate interest and ownership from the end users.

In general private and public developments continually focus more on engaging citizens, users and stakeholders. This is being achieved through workshops and working group projects. During this process the people can give their ideas and points of views on the site and their wishes for the future plan. By taking in ideas and local knowledge, combined with professional knowledge from the landscape architect, new points of view, and a look from the outside result in a more coherent project, that is locally anchored and based on the qualities of the specific place. Landscape architects have an important role to listen to the end users, whilst at the same time listen to their own ideas, professional knowledge and creativity to seek new solutions and opportunities that are anchored to the place, respecting the history of the place and adding new values to the site.

By involving people and discussing the qualities and potentials of a place, landscape architects can create places for people, places with poetry, places for community and places for change and temporality.

Image: Copenhagen’s Bike Snake
Helsinki, the Finnish capital, is situated on the seashore, with some open views all the way to the horizon. The shoreline has always carried special meanings for the inhabitants of the city – as a source of livelihood and nutrition, as a traffic route and a connection to faraway places, as a market place, as a theatre of war and a line of defence or, sometimes, as an almost forgotten backyard suited for industry. For a long time now the shoreline has, for most people, meant a lot as a place to recreate, admire beauty and better understand the relation between urban life and the surrounding nature.

Dubbed the daughter of the Baltic, the City of Helsinki has over 130 kilometres of shoreline and 300 islands and each of its residents live within 10 kilometres of the sea. The shoreline is the single most important defining factor of the character of city. The shoreline attracts also worldwide interest. The first stage of the recent architectural competition for a new Guggenheim museum on the shoreline in a central harbour area of Helsinki received over 1700 proposals from over 70 countries.

Helsinki has a long-standing tradition of keeping all of its shores open and publicly accessible. At the moment and during the next decades the city is undergoing a significant period of change. Helsinki is one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in Europe. Brand new parts of the city are being built next to the old centre. Areas of former container and oil harbours are being converted into housing and commerce. The tradition of public shoreline continues in the new city parts, still under construction, as new coastal parks and streets of high quality.

In the field of Public spaces, the French projects, all selected by competitions, follow a common process in design based on a deep understanding of the context in its various strata: geography, history, uses, practices. The reflection is solidly rooted into the original ground. For example the Paillon river promenade in Nice, by Pena and Pena Studio, is a Central Park for the well being and the new uses of the population.

The Saint Ouen docklands park by Agence Ter is a flagship park in a future Eco-district located on a former industrial site along the Seine river, in the inner suburbs of Paris, with various activities in cooperation with the population, community gardens, educational greenhouses, cookery courses for all.
Other examples are Le Grand Lyon, the Rover Garonne and the new Paris Zoological Park. Le Grand Lyon is an exemplary policy of the regeneration of all the public spaces, not only into the hypercenter but also at the periphery disadvantaged areas like the Berges du Rhône, by In Situ Studio, a former parking lot transformed into a recreational space in collaboration with the citizens. The River Garonne waterfront in Bordeaux, by Michel Corajoud, is a former port waste-land transformed into a space to share multiple activities, with different sequences between nature and city.

The new Paris zoological park, by Jacqueline Osty Studio is a succession of scenes to evoke the original biotopes of the animals. Those examples accomplish the aim of becoming a place for public to enjoy that should consider proximity and purpose, beyond location. Therefore, one step forward was made into defining landscape as important at the neighborhood level, not only through its aesthetics but contributing to the development of marginal districts.

Increasingly higher demands are placed on the performance of our environment as a result of the more intensive utilization of urban and rural areas. Demographic development, shrinkage and growth of cities, climate change, and the energy turnaround lead to continuously increasing environmental strains. Solar fields and the cultivation of bio-energy crops are characteristic of innovative land use while additional traffic thoroughfares and electric power lines cut through landscape areas. The existing infrastructure is currently being adapted to the changed conditions under considerable effort, with the conversion of entire systems. Parallel to this, particularly as a result of climate change, we observe an inclination to regard original landscape elements as being "systemically relevant" and to assign them with an independent value as "green infrastructure".

**Green infrastructure as social strategy**

As a result of these tendencies, it becomes apparent once again that the management of natural resources may not be regarded from a local perspective, but must be integrated in a larger context. In the broadest sense, green infrastructure therefore stands for human activity in the landscape. It comprises both nature-related structures as well as open space elements, which are subject to strong anthropogenic influences – in Germany this term can certainly be used to summarize the majority of cultivated landscape areas.

Green infrastructure therefore appears in the form of very diverse topic areas. These include, for example, flood protection measures, the integration of traffic and energy systems, the development of urban greening, and the design of health and leisure landscapes. The overall objective here is to improve the diversity and resilience of our environment, to limit the effects of climate change and to capacitate the daily living environment for its inhabitants. Particularly in densely populated areas, the range of requirements can only be managed with concepts for the multifunctional utilization of spaces, a key element of green infrastructure.

From 2009 to 2011, the so-called "Isar Plan" was implemented section by section: necessary flood protection, improvement of the ecological situation, creation of attractive leisure space for the residents of the Founder Epoch (Gründerzeit) district. Now the aquatic landscape presents itself more open in the urban section as well – as one can see here at the island Weideninsel. The flattened shoreline and the terraced design of the parcels of land bordering the shore ensure a view of the Isar River into the distance while also enabling direct access to the river.
Green infrastructure as planning opportunity
Do we now also need special tools to create green infrastructure in addition to all the tried-and-tested tools for open space and landscape design? Surely this also includes a wide range of elements, which are always designed by open space and landscape planners – everyday tasks, which landscape architects master daily with intervention-compensation balancing, environmental reports and many other means. But the strategy of green infrastructure goes far beyond this. Within the scope of the current public debate, the window of opportunity reopens to consider the ecological and social functions of landscape in a broader context. If current technically justified measures are often difficult to convey as individual components and are at risk of being “thought away”, these should find a much greater acceptance within the scope of a higher-ranking objective, which above all should be publicly accepted.

In addition to all the gray, there is now also the green infrastructure! It is an independent system of foresighted existence and public welfare, in which the principles of sustainably-oriented design assumes their built form. Based on these aspects, we should also consider whether our design toolkit contains the right tools or if we need to adapt our equipment to suit the purpose.

After the European Union initiated an innovative development with the strategy for green infrastructure the related objectives are given coverage more frequently. This is already an indication of the strategy’s potential. President of the bdla, Till Rehwaldt, sums up the matter for the landscape architects: “When we address the current social developments today, it becomes quickly obvious that the topics landscape and environmental development are strongly advancing to become the focus of public interest. The concept of green infrastructure links spaces of natural and anthropogenic perspectives and thereby represents a balance between humanity and the environment.” Landscape architects and their professional association, the bdla, should therefore be at the forefront of the current discussion. Perhaps in doing so this will enable the fields of work, which have been increasingly regarded as singular entities in recent years, to be reunited more strongly under one common concept.

Because after all, green infrastructure = landscape architecture!

The open grounds of the PHOENIX West blast furnace facility is transformed into a modern services location, surrounded by an extensive landscape park. Technical necessities (development, retention, building management) and ecological requirements are integrated and the banked design forms the basis for the new potential landscape.

Ireland’s Ancient Landscape has been managed and changed by humanity for thousands of years. Because of the presence of the Atlantic Ocean, defence systems have been eroded by the sea. The contemporary urban landscape is also continuously changing. The landscape democracy regarded in the case of Ireland, is strongly connected to the need of recognized specialization that can provide expert advice, and when needed training and capacity development for both protection of historical sites and urban contemporary landscape. Unfortunately, the practice of landscape architecture has a long way until a specific framework will be adopted and established within the Irish borders.

The Irish Landscape Institute is assuring that the landscape architecture practice is complied with the European Landscape Convention. In 2011, the Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht issued the draft document A National Landscape Strategy (NLS) for Ireland. The Institute issued a response to this document, and subsequently worked with the Department and the NLS steering group towards progressing the draft strategy. Three years on, the Strategy is pending the release and implementation of a finalized National Landscape Strategy. Public Participation is a main highlight of the strategy in landscape management. The strategy proposes a National Coordination Group that includes regional assemblies which will allow local and sectoral participation in decision-making processes regarding the local landscape.

Irish landscape architects, although have a protected title and reserved functions, has yet to improve the recognition and regulation of profession. Currently projects can be developed and signed off by anyone but tend to be signed off by Architects and Engineers as legally regulated professions.
**Landscape as a bridge between people**

**Association of Landscape Architects, Israel**

The Israeli view on Landscape Democracy aims to set the importance of binded groups and string connection between people and nature. Landscape analysis and community engagement will not only provide a meaningful intervention in situ, but contributes to the understanding of the landscape dynamics' and their connection with human activity.

The Kidron Valley – Wadi El Nar Basin Master and Action Plan is one of several environmental, community based, grassroots led and multinational projects that are moving forward these days. The project looks as the river basin as the only real border, one that is closely related to environment and ecology, one that is very much about infrastructure, and green infrastructure. The unique planning and design process includes several individuals, professionals, religious and secular leaders, community groups, schools etc. Several levels of meetings and activities engage both Israelis and Palestinians with the Wadi-scape and with each other. By addressing issues of drainage and sewage with contemporary infrastructure The valley is transformed form a neglected wasteland into a cultural basin with systems of trails and sites and the core ecological values could easily be restored.

Perhaps the projects greatest achievement is that the landscape serves as a medium - the Valley (Wadi) as a bridge between people and the setting for a dialogue, for education, for collaboration. The Kidron is one of 5 crossing Border Rivers, the first project of its kind in the region and a project that is already serving as a beacon for several other projects such as the Yarqon River. It demonstrates that the role of the landscape in our region is crucial. That in the harsh and brutal climate and middle east setting we all share common challenges and if we are brave enough to chart a common path, democracy and peace could be achieved, and both nations could prosperity and share a common landscape and a bright future.

Kidron Valley, Israel © Chris Yunker

**People and Public Places**

**Association of Landscape Architecture, Italy**

„People live in a place, therefore they are“, this sentence underlines the fundamental relation between human life and its context, as well as the concept of men builder of landscapes, within nice places, where he could find relations with his life, perceiving their qualities, mirror of his wellness and identity (European Landscape Convention, 2000). This means that it is so important to ensure the right at people to participate at choices and transformations, contributing with knowledge and experience to give quality at their own places.

Private places have physical access for few people, while public places have free access to everybody. Public places constitute the collective sphere of people life of cities, villages especially identified as squares, parks and streets. The first model of public places, we have inherited from the past, was the ancient Greek Agora, symbol of democracy, open to everybody to debate and share public arguments, a model that could be found also at the modern Speakers Corner in Hyde Park, in London, remarkable example of opinion freedom, where everybody could express himself. From the ancient Rome people had been meeting in the Forum for political and commercial reasons throughout the Middle Ages until nowadays where the market is the most efficient engine of implementation of the sense of community.
Public parks from the XVIII century, the Age of Enlightenment, were considered as tools to cultivate minds and to improve endeavour of lower classes, mixing there people without social class distinction, moreover to improve social health, (F.L. Olmsted Central Park). From the 60's we are attending progressively at the globalization phenomena, where new models of public places have been emerging such as private/public designed for commercial aims defined "no-places", when a "place" is where one can recognize itself common at those who living together are identified as such, from whom don't live there (Marc Augé).

Today, facing the economic crisis, where most of the construction activities have been slowing down, people have the opportunity to reflect on the design of public places, taking inspiration from the past, reinventing the pre-existence, testing new uses, also in a temporary mode, before making strong irreversible transformations that could cause further consumption of soil.

We are looking forward to a new model of life, where people have more free time, so there is a renewal importance of socialization, a need of multifunctional places such as primitive functions than leisure. This need could be, for example accomplished by urban agriculture, in its different shapes and dimensions in urban than in peripheral areas by a re-qualification of abandoned or disused areas where the allotments or vegetable gardens could assume the role of meeting places, hosting opportunities of socialization, education, both useful for construction of a social identity, such as assume the role of integration of new communities.

Taking care of places, people could learn from nature the relation between environment resources and biological mechanism, while building awareness about their right and due to contribute at the quality of places.
In the regional river programme Waalwede, many regional and local actors, enterprises included, are involved in the planning process next to landscape architects and other experts.

In Overdiepse Polder, another Room for the River project, local farmers invented the innovation of farm mounds to avoid being dislocated. With their participation, Bosch Slabbers landscape architects have redesigned and materialized the original idea into detail.

In Culemborg, a citizens' initiative in co-creation with the local city council redeveloped an old fortress Werk aan het Spoel of the New Dutch Waterline. They selected landscape architect Ronald Rietveld to help them revitalize this military relict into a living landscape element with the highest design standards.

Talking about involvement the best example is perhaps the eco-village Lanxmeer, where the public organized the construction and maintenance of their surroundings. (Photo: Niek Hazendonk)

The story of a dam landscape
The dark and bright sides of freedom

Somewhere in Poland...there is a unique rock range called Pieniny. At the end of the nineteenth century a famous spa was built here. In 1932 the first in Europe a cross-border National Park was established there. The surroundings were famous for their exceptional nature and rich history.

The transformation of the Pieniny cultural landscape was made through the construction of the reservoir in the Dunajec Valley as seen in the images above.

After the Second World War the time came for the Polish People’s Republic (PRL) and under the laws from 1946 and 1961 the ownership rights were limited as well as the right of disposal of one’s own land. On this basis the borders of the National Park were extended and a plan to build a gigantic dam in the Dunajec River valley was developed.

After the transformation in 1989 came a period of reveling in freedom. The law was reexamined (the law on land-use planning from 2003), while democratic local authorities began work on projects for new democratic land-use plans. The final execution of the water reservoir coincided with the development of entrepreneurship. The plans based on new rules proved to be pro investment and they met the demands of the majority of the inhabitants. The new democracy contributed to creation of new landscape parallel to the existing conditions and arguments. Large areas were earmarked for housing and a new developed sphere of services as well as all kinds of tourist attractions.

The initiated actions were put in motion in accordance with the rules of inertia of planning processes which over the time attain their full form. Changes concerned the settlements, infrastructure and the social sphere. The effects of complex conditions were reflected in the landscape. The excess of the buildings, fields lying fallow and increasing natural succession are changing the face of the Pieniny surroundings.

The Settlement development predicted by the pro investment spatial plan:
Pathways
Towards a More Sustainable Future

Associação Portuguesa dos Arquitetos Paisagistas, Portugal

The history of Portuguese landscape reflects a long and rich path of ecological evolution and cultural (human) activity. The complexity established by a close relationship between man and land, reveals a great diversity of landscapes, from North to South, from the Atlantic coast to the Mediterranean inland. As in almost all European countries history, this path was troubled, intricate and landscape democracy still faces great challenges and threats, especially concerning the conflicts arising from land use versus ecological sustainability. Besides its well established legal framework concerning landscape conservation and management, the political debate within the Portuguese territorial economic objectives still undermine the fundamental balance between man and land.

Dramatic facts and consequences derived from an inadequate land use are diverse, ranging from: systematic urban sprawl ignoring ecological complexity and landscape suitability; eucalyptus and pine unsustainable forestry exploitation in the detriment of native forests; touristic occupation of coastal areas, reducing its resilience and destroying its character, not mentioning its aesthetical features. Despite all this, the contribution of Portuguese landscape architects to policy development within the framework of landscape sustainability, as well as bottom-up urban design solutions, proved to be valuable and extensive. Examples come from all scales, precursor of resilient cities, re-establishing the relationship between urban and rural spaces and giving the agricultural landscapes balanced conditions to produce and live.

Along the last decade a great number of river fronts and coastal areas improved with landscape interventions - promoting promenades, cycling paths, meeting squares and beautiful sights. Green infrastructures were introduced or enhanced in several towns and some important areas returned to nature conservancy. Urban residents are nowadays more aware and demanding green and soft mobility solutions.

All these new experiences share a common ground towards a robust landscape democracy: making spaces of equality; re(creating) landscapes of freedom by acknowledging the ecological circumstances and history of place; reconciling Man and Nature, by managing economic growth while protecting Landscape legacy to future generations.

A place for everyone and for anyone at the same time

Romanian Landscape Architects Association, Romania

Many of us agree that, Constitutional ideals of democracy, human rights, equality and freedom have a tangible landscape dimension. Democracy as an ideal is rooted in free debate in public space: landscape is the spatial materialisation of democracy. At this time of global environmental and economic challenges driving increasing social tensions, there is urgent need for on-going discussion about the role of landscape in society, and relevant insights and knowledge to address such situations’ (prof. Shelley Egoz, head of Centre for Landscape Democracy, NMBU), and that, Landscape Democracy is a form of planning and design in which all citizens are meant to participate equally, either directly or through elected representatives in the proposal, development and establishment of the rules by which their landscape and open spaces are shaped [...]’ (IFLA EUROPE’s General Assembly, Oslo, Norway, October 2014).

But... what happens when a public space perceived as a place for everyone and for none at the same time become ‘overnight’ a place for some and in particular of someone?

Rennovation of historical center. Final proposal, 2010 (Timisoara, RO)
Rennovation of Liberty Square. Final proposal, 2010. (Timisoara, RO)
Liberty square, 2013 (Timisoara, RO)
Liberty square, 2015 (Timisoara, RO)
When decisions regarding the space are taken by individuals and not by the community? When a public space with a cultural and affective past, falls victim to arbitrary decisions? Extracting it from the context, from the collective memory, from history, thus breaking apart the relationship between the two, leads to the loss of identity, turning it into a non-place. The abandonment of duration and loss of urban lifestyle memory will lead eventually to a collective reaction of rejection, to alienation through emotional detachment. And what happens if these places are containers of natural assets threatened with irremediable loss?

It is perhaps just a sad south-eastern European story but analyzing it with detachment, beyond this specific case, the issue is current and acute in many of the European countries where both people and professionals have still some battles to win in their desire to arrive at a good cooperation with the decision-making factors. The city is a public space and therefore, every planning decision must answer primarily to the needs of the community. For that matter, anthropic equilibrium in regards to nature is one of the principles that define modern urbanism: ‘[…] landscape is a criterion for every citizen's quality of life’ (CoE, European Landscape Convention, 2000). Space and landscape are tangible expressions of society, they have an impact on daily living and their quality affects wellbeing.

In 2014 Norway celebrated the bicentenary of its Constitution. This particular event opened up a special opportunity for the professional Association for Landscape Architecture in Norway (NLA) to host the IFLA Europe’s Regional Conference and all the events held within highlighted this suggestive theme and burning issue: Landscape and Democracy.

Started as an experiment - Pecha Kucha is a very important undertaking for IFLA Europe’s internal and external relationships and visibility. So it was not by chance that the theme for the 2014 topic was entitled People and Places as each of us has the responsibility to promote and entrenched the fundamental principles of a sustainable environment leading to public awareness that this profession has made great strides towards a well-deserved recognition. We have the example of our European colleagues whose ascension was not without challenges 25 years ago and to whom we owe the federation itself. In the near future this event will open to the general public, so as the GA. This will ensure us with even greater visibility as often the activities inside GA are kept elusive for those ‘back home’ not to mention the extraordinary opportunity to promote our vision to the world.

IFLA Europe exists and gets stronger everyday due to continuous efforts of all members who actively contribute during this period of time in all national associations, within working groups, or who are simply preoccupied by their professional activity. Diversity can become an interesting statement of our time.
Planning with people

Sveriges Arkitekter, Sweden

The larger cities in Sweden are becoming more dense, and as they do the relationship to public open spaces develop. Places need to be planned in collaboration with the users—so that the design encourage people to use and care for them. Who gets to shape the planning process in the different parts of the country? To find out we visited three large cities in the north, the south and the west.

Malmö is located 20 minutes from Copenhagen and has one of the greatest mix of nationalities in Sweden. After several violent incidents the city has looked into how to achieve a more equitable and socially sustainable city in the large commission: http://malmo.se/Kommun--politik/Socialt-hallbart-Malmo/Kommission-for-ett-socialt-hallbart-Malmo/Commission-for-a-Socially-Sustainable-Malmoe-in-English.html One spatial challenge has been to socially connect different parts of town and to involve those rarely using the public open space. In 2010 Rosengårdsstråket started and in Rosengård teenage girls were involved in shaping a public open space. Through their consultation the designed focused on dance and music rather than sport activities. A playful place was created where everyone should feel welcome, particularly girls from different cultural backgrounds. The design and use of the place Rosens röda matta came out quite different to the first proposal made by a landscape architect.

Göteborg sits at the mouth of the river Göta Älv in the west country. The docks and shipping industry along the quays are being transformed into new urban districts. The city has adopted the challenge of creating a socially mixed and livable city. The urban design process has included multidisciplinary design teams and included small local businesses and entrepreneurs that may invest in the ideas that are developed during the designs process www.alvstaden.goteborg.se/omradet/ringon/. Through this working model a lot of the existing structures will be retained and the use and design of open spaces adapted to what there is. One of the ideas coming out of the project is the openair gallery on Ringön.

Umeå is the largest city in the north of Sweden on the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia. 2014 the city hosted the cultural capital of Europe. One of the projects was the stately financed Cooperation in designing public places and urban development.

A performing artist Beatrice Hansson and Nivå Landscape architecture office made 400 stools and placed them on Vasaplatsen - a transit space in central Umeå. People passing and stopping in Vasaplatsen were finding ways to reassemble the stools. The designers observed how the users were furnishing the space and developed a design based on the possibilities shown by the public participation.

the PLACE where PEOPLE practice direct DEMOCRACY in a stunning landscape

Bund Schweizer Landschaftsarchitekten, Switzerland

Switzerland is next to cheese and chocolate also commonly associated with the concept of direct democracy. It has shaped the country and the mindset of its people over many hundred years. Although these days direct democracy is usually practiced by way of ballot voting, there still are two Cantons where the original form survives, the landsgemeinde (community assembly). One of them is Glarus, where the landsgemeinde takes place outdoors on a town square, amidst stunning scenery. Seeing that, one wonders what influence the place might have on the decisions taken.

The landsgemeinde is the legislative assembly of the canton of Glarus. All citizens age 16 and older vote on legislative and constitutional amendments, as well as on the tax rate. Also the cantonal judge and the landammann (chief executive) are elected by the rural community. During the landsgemeinde each voter has the right to speak to a specific issue and also propose amendments. The open discussion also leads to an open discourse, in which all voters can participate.

The landsgemeinde is a cooperative form of democracy. The citizen exercises in the landsgemeinde a state function and is itself part of the state. Similar to a parliamentarian the citizen exerts its function it open-ly. Hence there is no secret voting, which in fact is the main reason that this form of direct democracy has been abandoned by most other cantons in Switzerland.

The landsgemeinde in Glarus usually gathers on the first Sunday in May, followed by a popular city festival. Here democracy is really celebrated together, first in a serious way concerning politics and afterwards in a more joyful way with a party. This way democracy is tangible and definitely more fun. To participate becomes relevant and meaningful. And the landscape setting is simply impressive and worth the trip all by itself.
Conclusion

Landscape Democracy is a concept that forces us to reflect not only to the role of landscape architecture in an evolving and urbanizing world, but to understand the processes of creation and adoption of landscape structures, be it in artsy, explanatory or documentary way. Landscape architects are in charge of applying the mandate of European Landscape Convention locally, but as well to scale up and bring it in global discussion. There is need of both debate and action, as much as there is need of a clear framework of institutionalizing landscape architecture’s role in decision making processes in spatial planning, policy making and action taking.

When introducing in discussion concepts such as “democracy”, we refer to core beliefs and principles of landscape architectural practice. The core beliefs should be reflected to validated agreements on the need of educated practice in a word that needs landscape architecture for answering to challenges such as urbanization, climate change and disaster risk reduction. Principles of landscape architectural practice have a very good standing, supported by theories and examples that proved to be valuable lessons for the future.

The exercise of launching such theme among the national members of IFLA EUROPE has been a challenging task for the national landscape architectural scene that had to define a common view of what landscape democracy is, but as well for IFLA to having a collection of such different interpretations of landscape democracy. Nevertheless, can we extract core principles of landscape democracy? Can we narrow its description towards development of tools for practice?

Following the contributions received, there are several highlights that should be brought into attention. Firstly, according to many of the contributions, landscape democracy is related to public space, to public participation in decision making, but also to education which is particularly important as education starts being a dominant subject when asking for public participation. Secondly, there is a general consensus that landscape democracy recognizes specialties and experts, and this does not contradict public participation but rather facilitates it in a manner that will bring value to landscape architecture projects. Thirdly, landscape democracy is a way of bringing people’s attention on multi-level collaboration: community, experts, decision makers an policy developers for achieving a common vision in leaving a demographic landscape, and ways each can play a role.

Landscape democracy should become a steady position for the practice, as it builds inclusion and recognition. Landscape democracy will therefore encourage further development based on knowledge and local disaggregated data. Gender, defavorized groups and risks induced directly or indirectly by a changing climate, are only a few of the items that will most likely build a framework for global development of landscape democracies via participatory processes.

To conclude, landscape democracy is a the basis for future tool development, aiming to concretize values and principles that landscape architecture practice should aim for, with the ambition to institutionalize a framework of practice that will be recognized, adopted and implemented at global level, national, regional and local levels through authorities, institutions, professionals and communities together.
Silver Jubilee IFLA EUROPE Award

IFLA EUROPE

In 1948, the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) came into being. It is recognised by UNESCO as the official body representing the profession worldwide. At the time it was a profession that was epitomized by its design skills, but since it has evolved to become a broader, holistic profession concerned with many aspects of the environment in which we live, work and play.

In 1957 The European Economic Community was established with the signing of the Treaty of Rome. The implications for IFLA were not immediate and, whilst other professional bodies began to work on Sectoral Agreements for the free movement of professionals within the European Community, experience indicated that such agreements were especially slow to negotiate. As a result, the EC decided that it would be more efficient to draft legal instruments covering the general mutual recognition of professional qualifications.

Concerned that such a general directive might work to the disadvantage of the profession, the European Foundation for Landscape Architecture was created in Brussels in 1989 with the aim of harmonising the education and practice of landscape architecture within the countries then members of the European Union (12); and a regular process of close cooperation within the legislative framework of the EU commenced.

With an expanding membership of the EU and a corresponding increasing membership of EFLA, IFLA was able to reorganise its own structure and in 1999, ten years later, EFLA effectively became IFLA Europe, adopting to a large measure the organisation framework and statutes of the former organisation. Not only was this the most appropriate way forward but it also allowed the new organisation the ability to align itself more closely with the Council of Europe, which coincidentally was also founded in the late 40’s.

In Florence in 2000, within the context of democratic governance, culture, heritage and diversity, the Council of Europe published the European Landscape Convention. The convention was broadly defined as a reflection of European identity and diversity stating that landscape is our living and cultural heritage, be it ordinary or outstanding, urban or rural, on land or in water. Now forty of the forty-seven member states of the Council of Europe have signed the convention.

The European Landscape Convention is an outstanding and remarkable agreement. It is a new instrument which is devoted exclusively to the protection, management and planning of all landscapes in Europe. IFLA Europe especially welcomes the convention because its aspirations are so closely aligned to those of the professional body representing landscape architects in Europe. It recognises for instance, the need to raise awareness of the value of landscapes, the need for the training of specialists in landscape, the importance of the democratic process in the identification and assessment of landscapes and, the requirement of putting landscape policies into effect. Furthermore, it encourages the pooling and exchange of information and experience, and the transfrontier co-operation at the local and regional level.

Therefore, in celebrating twenty-five years of close collaboration by its member organisations, IFLA Europe wishes to formally recognise the immensely important work of the European Landscape Convention, as well as other significant texts such as the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Social Charter. And so, at its Silver Jubilee Conference and General Assembly in Oslo, in October 2014, around the theme of Landscape and Democracy, it is delighted to present IFLA EUROPE'S Silver Jubilee Award to the Council of Europe for its exceptional work associated with drafting and implementation of the European Landscape Convention.

Michael Oldham,
First IFLA EUROPE President (1989)

Many congratulations to the International Federation of Landscape Architects of Europe –IFLA Europe – for its major role in the implementation of the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe. The work of its members in education, training, research and projects carried out on the territory, are of crucial value to the evolution of the living environment of our societies.

The European Landscape Convention emphasises that the landscape contributes to human well-being and consolidation of identity. Eager to achieve sustainable development based on a balance between environmental, social, cultural and economic imperatives, the States Parties to the Convention undertake to integrate landscape into public policy, including both exceptional and “everyday” areas, as well as degraded territories.

Drawing on a broad vision of future living spaces, promoting sustainable and qualitative management of the territory and its resources, while remaining attentive to the aspirations of the people, landscape architects inscribe “landscape thoughts” on territories. They allow our societies to project themselves positively into a future which favours a harmonious way of life.

Maguelonne Déjeant-Pons
Executive Secretary of the European Landscape Convention
Council of Europe

IFLA Europe
General Assembly, Oslo, Norway, 2014
foto by Mona Vestili
Landscape Democracy Resolution

Landscape Democracy is a form of planning and design in which all citizens are meant to participate equally, either directly or through elected representatives in the proposal, development and establishment of the rules by which their landscape and open spaces are shaped.

The undersigned, as representatives of the 34 National Associations of the European Region of the International Federation of Landscape Architects, having considered Landscape democracy at our general assembly in Oslo,

WE BELIEVE

landscape is integrative
It functions as a platform to get people together to consider the future of the places they want to live in

democracy is participative
It means involving people and including them as part of the decision making process

Understanding that landscape is a cultural construct, developed through an organic and cumulative process, forming part of a common heritage which is central to the development of life quality,

Conscious that Europe’s citizens’ present day situation is affected by climate change and globalization processes, which are contributing to social fragmentation, ecological imbalance and loss of cultural identity

Realizing there is an urgent need to shape our landscape for the benefit of all, preventing unsustainable exploitation, and forming a participative governance system, that will ensure appropriate responses to growing urbanisation, industrialisation and pollution.

WE URGE

the Council of Europe, the European Union and all IFLA Europe Member States to develop a holistic vision regarding cultural, social, political, environmental, and economic balance beyond political borders, while

Advocating cultural policies in order to enhance education, training and professional competences so as to raise awareness with regard to landscape heritage and perception,

Ensuring a democratic vision capable of reasserting collective interests, surmounting cultural differences, strengthening the links between people and their environment,

Establishing landscape policies and programs that will ensure plural and collective participation,

Developing landscapes with local communities so that environmental challenges are addressed, drawing from local conditions and technologies for energy efficient landscapes and ecological integrity,

Promoting financial tools and managerial systems that enable communities to protect and improve their landscapes,

Recognising that IFLA Europe has the professional expertise, creative approach and holistic vision essential for the delivery of resilient societal solutions.

Following other international and European texts on the matter such as:

- The European Social Charter (CoE, 1961)
- The World Heritage Convention (Paris, 1972), whose Operative Guidelines first expressed the notion of Cultural Landscapes
- The Recommendation on participation by the people at large in cultural life and their contribution to it (UNESCO, Nairobi, 1976), with enhances an ample vision of democratic participation
- The Action Plan on Cultural Policies for Development (UNESCO, Stockholm, 1998), which recognises the importance of civil society within a democratic framework
- The European Landscape Convention (CoE, Florence, 2000)
The Executive Council of IFLA EUROPE certifies this document, as elected representatives of the 34 national associations that comprise the Federation,

Ana LUENGO, President

Marina CERVERA, Secretary General

Tony WILLIAMS, Vice President Education

Andrei CONDOROS, Vice President Professional Practice

Jeremy DENNIS, Treasurer.

IFLA EUROPE General Assembly, Oslo, Norway, October 2014.

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