

NEW URBAN LANDSCAPES

IFLA Europe Resolution– Brussels, Belgium – October 2025

At a time when Europe's cities are facing increasing pressures, the need to rethink our urban landscapes has never been more urgent. Today, over 75% of Europeans live in urban areas, a figure that continues to rise. Densely built environments, once celebrated as emblems of progress and modernity, now reveal their limits in the face of climate change, biodiversity collapse, social fragmentation, and the degradation of soil and water systems. Amid concrete and asphalt, significant ecological processes are challenged, worsened by the sealing of soils, disruption of hydrological cycles, loss of biodiversity, and fragmentation of habitats, while the human need for improved health, connection, and meaning are challenged.

The city, long seen as the engine of opportunities, now bears the marks of deep inequalities. Historic patterns of social injustice — exclusion, segregation, unequal access to green spaces — have evolved into new forms of environmental injustice. The burdens of urban heat, pollution, and ecological degradation weigh heaviest on the most vulnerable: low-income communities, marginalised groups, and future generations.

Yet, within this complexity lies a profound opportunity: to regenerate our urban landscapes as living, resilient, and inclusive spaces. A new vision is essential — one that embraces cities as dynamic ecosystems where nature, culture, and society coexist and thrive. Landscape architecture stands at the heart of this transformation. As a spatial discipline with ecological and cultural fluency, it is uniquely positioned to guide the regeneration of cities through nature-based solutions, community participation, and integrated systems thinking.

We recognise

- Urban landscapes are no longer a luxury or an afterthought but essential infrastructures of life, resilience, and belonging. We recognise that the adaptation of densely built environments must be guided by an integrated understanding of ecological processes, cultural identity, and social dynamics, where land is not merely occupied but nurtured.
- In the face of the European Green Deal, the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, the No Net Land Take objective for 2050, and the Nature Restoration Law, landscape architects possess the unique capacity to bridge policy ambitions with on-the-ground transformations. By weaving together soil, water, biodiversity, public space and human communities, landscape architects are pivotal actors in designing cities that are regenerative, inclusive, climate-resilient, and above all, desirable. Landscape architects have an innate interdisciplinary approach. This approach combines spatial intelligence with ecological and cultural sensitivity; an approach that is indispensable to reimagining the urban fabric in service of both people and the planet.

We call upon

- European, national, regional and local authorities, professional communities, educational institutions, private stakeholders and civil society to recognise, support and integrate landscape architecture as a key discipline in shaping the New Urban Landscapes of Europe.

We pledge

- To champion the renewal of urban landscapes as living, inclusive and resilient systems.
- To advance interdisciplinary collaboration, foster innovation, and advocate for the integration of ecological and social values at every scale of urban transformation.
- To engage with communities, decision-makers, and future generations with a spirit of care, courage and creativity.
- To make New Urban Landscapes a cornerstone of Europe's sustainable future, ensuring that no neighbourhood, no river, no tree, no community is left behind in the great adaptation process that lies ahead.

We urge

- For a fundamental shift in how cities are planned, designed and managed — moving beyond mitigation towards true regeneration, beyond fragmentation towards connection, and beyond exploitation towards stewardship.
- The European Union, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Directorate General for the Environment, the European Directorate General for Agriculture, the Council of Europe, the New European Bauhaus Collective, IUCN, International Association of Horticultural Producers (AIPH), IFLA Europe member states, monitoring and management bodies of the Ecological Transition-Recovery Funds, and other environmental parties:
 - o to promote the importance of a 'Governance of Change' in an evolutionary but identity-conscious sense, with Nature-based Solutions (NBS) and the ability to control complex transformations, typical of evolving landscapes that landscape architects govern with competence and experience as an essential element of their professional skills.
 - o to enhance the importance of strategic, responsible, sustainable, aesthetic and multifunctional plant use.
 - o to enrich our green and built-up areas; understanding that biodiversity is not simply a quantitative feature of a site but facilitates the re-connections and creation of green corridors between urban green areas and surrounding landscapes.
 - o to better recognise the landscape profession with clarity, to strengthen the relationship between spatial and urban planning, design, construction and management, enabling active participation in change management, recognising the importance of expert landscape advice at all stages and all levels of government.
 - o to communicate on all platforms and forums that landscape architects can help to mitigate the negative effects of climate change and biodiversity emergency, and bring new functionalities, resilience and beauty to our environment by mastering complex human-nature relationships.
 - o to provide an open-source platform as a forum for first degree information about the profession of landscape architecture.
 - o to highlight that only through natural features and processes provided by plants and landscape architecture the objective of creating healthy, liveable and sustainable cities can be achieved, including humans and more-than-humans embracing all of nature.
 - o to promote the importance of nature, and the quality of landscape planning, design and management, to restore a sustainable and resilient balance for an improved quality of life for all species.

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

- The European Social Charter (CoE, 1961)
- The World Heritage Convention (UNESCO, 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)
- Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats and The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (CoE / ICOMOS, 1979)
- United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD, 1992)
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 1992)
- The Århus Convention (UNECE, 1998)
- Action Plan on Cultural Policies for Development (UNESCO, Stockholm, 1998)
- European Climate Change Programme (EU, 2000)
- European Landscape Convention (CoE, Florence, 2000)
- Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO, 2003)
- Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (UNESCO, 2005)
- Environmental Action Programme to 2020 (EU, 2013)
- European Union Framework for Climate and Energy 2020–2030 (EU, 2014)
- Invasive Alien Species Regulation (EU, 2014)
- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN, 2015)
- Paris Agreement on Climate Change (UNFCCC, Paris, 2015)
- European Heritage Strategy for the 21st Century – Strategy 21 (CoE, 2017)
- Davos Declaration: Towards a High-Quality Baukultur for Europe (European Ministers of Culture, 2018)
- Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment (UN, 2018)
- The European Green Deal (EU, 2019)
- Farm to Fork Strategy (EU, 2020)
- The New European Bauhaus (EU, 2020–2021)
- European Climate Law (EU, 2021)
- EU Soil Strategy for 2030 (EU, 2021)
- Reykjavík Declaration (CoE, 2023)
- Nature Restoration Law (EU, 2024)