

EU Commission
Mr Frans Timmermans
Executive Vice-President - Eu Green Deal
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium

Brussels, 24 June 2020

Dear Commissioner Timmermans,

The European Commission presented recently its revised Work Program for the upcoming period. We, the European Landscape Contractors Association (ELCA) which represents 22 European countries in the garden- and landscape sector and the ELCA-associated countries Turkey, Japan and Canada, want to compliment the Commission with its decisive efforts to recover from the corona crisis and to create new perspectives on inclusive and sustainable growth. This challenging time demands cooperation and determination in order to make Europe liveable for current and future generations. As ELCA, we want to contribute to that goal.

The garden and landscape sector has made a huge transition in the past decade. It is our conviction that greenery no longer serves as only decoration. We strive for the application of greenery as a nature based solution for societal challenges with regard to climate change, the loss of biodiversity and the well-being of people. In 2012 ELCA was involved in the definition of nature based solutions within the Horizon 2020 Program. Since then, a lot of scientific research is done to prove the contribution of greenery in different cases and to develop new green innovations in gardens, public green and green buildings. In The Netherlands for example this information is translated to new business cases in the concepts of The Living Garden and The Living Building. Later this year there will be a new manual presented with green solutions in the public area. With all this knowledge and experience we feel that we are partner in the ambitions of the European Commission in the coming years. Specifically in the European Green Deal we see many opportunities.

The Green Deal contains different links to our sector. In the recent consultation on climate we pleaded for the application of nature based solutions in order to absorb CO2 and improve air quality, store abundant water and prevent heat stress. The same we did on the Renovation Wave. Buildings can also be made energy efficient and sustainable by using nature based solutions. We are very enthusiastic about the strategic lines on biodiversity. Also here we can provide solutions to create and maintain ecosystems that contribute to the protection of plants, insects and animals. We look forward to work together in the Skills Agenda. It is very important to further develop green skills and to make cross overs with other sectors such as construction, technic and health. We must no longer think within sectorial silos, but in reinforcing efforts and speed up initiatives. Working on the quality of our living climate is, as we see the impact on our daily lives already, of high urgency. If we are able to turn this challenge into chances, then we move faster in the right way.

With this letter we want present ourselves as partner in the realization of the goals, specifically related to the subjects mentioned above, of the EU Work Program. We hope that you can help us to get in touch with colleagues of the European Commission with whom we can discuss our ideas and define concrete actions for cooperation. In order to transmit the messages of The Living Garden and The Living Building, which are now only in the Dutch language, we hope that you can support us with translation and linkage to stakeholders relevant for the implementation of nature based solutions. In common dialogue with the European Commission we want to brainstorm on more opportunities for greening our society, take up our role as green partner in the definition of policies and involve our gardeners and landscapers in the realization of projects.

One of the opportunities where we can meet is the European Green Week. ELCA will be present there with a booth and contributes to the conference program. Our idea is that we use our participation in the Green Week for the gathering of new ideas and contacts. Possibly we can work out common activities during this week.

We are looking forward to dialogue and cooperation. For your ideas and suggestions we keep ourselves recommended. Together we make Europe greener!

With kind regards,



Henrik Bos

ELCA President

ELCA - European Landscape Contractors Association

The European Landscape Contractors Association (ELCA) is the European association of the landscape professionals. Together we work on the design, construction and maintenance of gardens, public green and green buildings. 25 countries are affiliated to ELCA, together representing 13 000 companies and 125 000 employees. On behalf of this large group, ELCA wants to be the discussion partner and to strengthen the social movement towards greening and sustainability with this large group. ELCA calls on the importance of greenery with societal benefits in Europe and is the voice of the green professionals who take care for this important work. For further information visit: www.ELCA.info