

## Article

# The Role of Landscape Architecture Profession Recognition in the Context of Facing Contemporary Challenges

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**Abstract:** Landscape, as an essential component of quality of life for humans all over the world, is undergoing a period of rapid and profound changes, mainly due to such phenomena as climate challenges and social crises. Landscape Architects, more than ever, are expected to play a significant role in responding to current environmental and social challenges. Although many claim that Landscape Architecture is the profession of the 21st century, it is still struggling to gain proper recognition worldwide and in Europe. In the meantime, numerous legal instruments have been developed to facilitate the regulation of various professions in Europe. This paper aims to map the status and factors affecting the regulation process across Europe and investigate the role of legislation and legal recognition regarding Landscape Architect's services, their professional title, and mobility. In order to achieve such goals, a short literature overview of the most recent and relevant research of mapping the profession and studies undertaken by IFLA Europe was performed as well as a collection of data for the survey and the composition of a questionnaire that was sent to all Delegates of the National Associations. The results were compiled into separate documents for the regulated and non-regulated countries. They present the specificities of the profession that constitute the basis for its regulation, the importance of the legal recognition of the profession for a stronger professional environment for Landscape Architects, and the catalyst role of legislation determining professional recognition.



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**Keywords:** landscape architecture; legal recognition; professional regulation; mobility; professional title; competencies; challenges; Europe

## 1. Introduction

As people and planet, we are facing severe problems that impact our quality of life and morbidity, particularly in towns and cities. These include, among others, air pollution, natural disasters, and overheating [1–10]. While it is obvious that landscape remains a crucial element impacting quality of life, currently, we are experiencing a period of profound transformations with regards to the landscape. This is mainly [11] due to climate challenges and social crises [12–15].

Among the most powerful legal tools, the European Landscape Convention [16,17] has proved particularly valuable for many countries, and especially those lacking adequate legal instruments for landscape protection and its sustainable management [18]. In the European Landscape Convention, recently renamed the Landscape Convention, one of the general measurements is the legal recognition and integration of the landscape and the establishment of policies to protect, manage, and plan landscapes [16]. It is also interesting to mention that through this convention, Landscape Design specialists are required to implement some of its measures referred specifically to landscape identification, analysis, and assessment [11]. A step forward was made at the Conference of the Council of Europe

European Landscape Convention in May 2019, when a declaration was made encouraging the State Parties of the European Landscape Convention [19] to officially recognize the profession at both national and international levels, to strengthen a multileveled attitude to the landscape with the help and cooperation of other relevant professions during every step of planning, and encourage a multidisciplinary approach in landscape professionals' education process, with particular regard to science, management, and planning.

The profession, which was described by the pioneer of Landscape Architecture F. L. Olmsted as "the new art of urban order" [20], was developed in response to the 19th century's challenges in the spirit of sustainable development and applying nature-based solutions undertaken in cooperation with the society. Designs in harmony with nature and the need to treat the environment of post-industrial sites sustainably has recently become the core of designs for Landscape Architects [21–25].

With the foundation of the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) in 1948, the goal of the profession has been to shape the environment of the future, especially the reconstruction of war-torn cities and regions [26]. In 1989, with the constitution of the European Federation of Landscape Architects (EFLA), the European Associations of Landscape Architects aimed to prepare for the Common Market and among the EFLA's goals were the following: 1. Acting on behalf of professional associations or institutions of the member states in the European Commission (E.C.); 2. promoting work-related activity and exchange among National Associations; 3. advocating for educational standards and the exchange of knowledge, technical information, and studies; and 4. consulting with the E.C. with regard to a number of directives on the natural and cultural landscape [27]. Currently, the IFLA comprises 80 National Professional Associations, aiming to describe the scope of the Landscape Architecture profession and working on the social aspect until national specificity resurfaces [28].

In 2005, the IFLA announced a charter defining principles, goals, and criteria for professional training activities in the field of Landscape Architecture [29]. It is a non-governmental, voluntary system of monitoring and reviewing tertiary education, in which institution programs are benchmarked against specific requirements for the education of professionals. Of course, this presupposes an education in accordance with architectural, artistic, ecological, engineering, and scientific principles to build the capacity to conceptualize, coordinate, and execute integral designs rooted in human traditions and the knowledge of natural and human-made systems [30]. At this stage, education plays a crucial role, especially in the growing of a critical mass of Landscape Architects capable of progressing the discipline in the research and the publication capacity [31]. In 1990, the European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools (ECLAS) was set up to increase collaboration among universities, to encourage and evolve the highest standards of Landscape Architecture education in Europe, as well as enhance collaboration in teaching [31,32]. Nowadays, the challenges for Landscape Architecture programs include responding to issues related to climate change with the social and political aspects in mind, particularly with studio classes that specialize in community involvement methods and the process of post-disaster restoration [31].

Throughout Europe, Landscape Architecture has shown a significant differentiation, moving from a predominantly private practice (e.g., private gardens and estates) to the public sphere (e.g., public parks, factory grounds, and urban planning) and progressing at the same rate [28,33]. In the early 20th century, the overlap with parallel disciplines led to a re-examination of the profession of Landscape Architects [33] and professional Landscape Architects often competed with horticulturists and non-professional gardeners, as well as architects and town planners [28]. Therefore, there was a need for evidence of the specialized professional activity, competence, formal education, and potential licensing to authorities, clients, and related professions. In the meantime, over all these years, the regulation of the profession has been one of the main topics of discussion among Landscape Architects, to overcome the obstacles of free practice in their countries as well as in those where the profession is not recognized. The development or establishment of the Landscape

Architecture profession identity was founded on the attempts of National Associations (1880–1930) and, more recently, the efforts of the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) to organize the practitioners and to establish educational standards [34].

Therefore, the major concern of a number of scholars was the definition of the Landscape Architect's role, focused on the connection between man and nature or landscape, the synthesis of the world's complexities [35], and the coordination of service seekers, policymakers, expert advisors, and local communities in landscape policies and design implementation, but also the holistic knowledge and approach of landscape design to various scales [36,37]. When considering registration laws and licensing professionals, the dominant purpose is not to protect the professionals, but rather the public and to ensure that the professionals have satisfactorily established their qualifications to serve the public. For this reason, the European Commission's Health and Food Safety Directorate-General (SANTE), in its strategic plan, outlines the importance of public health and safety [38] and thus defines the new objectives of the landscape architecture profession. Nowadays, as an extension of the European Green Deal and the New European Bauhaus, the contemporary Landscape Architecture profession is facing the challenge of supporting the Commission in addressing the many societal issues in Europe and beyond, as well as environmental protection and consumer safety. In order to justify the above, a new definition was submitted for approval to the International Labor Organization (ILO), mentioning that: *Landscape Architects plan, design, and manage natural, rural, and built environments, applying aesthetic and scientific principles to address the sustainability, quality, and health of landscapes, collective memory, heritage and culture, and territorial justice. By leading and coordinating other disciplines, Landscape Architects deal with the interactions between natural and cultural ecosystems, such as adaptation and mitigation related to climate change and the stability of ecosystems, socioeconomic improvements, and community health and welfare to create places that anticipate social and economic well-being* [39]. Regarding the diversity within the profession, the broad spectrum of tasks, from analysis to planning and design, on all scales of projects, from the tiniest to the largest [40], may create confusion at times. As such, the IFLA Europe (2019) has published the Charter on the European Landscape Architect, which defines a Landscape Architect as a professionally qualified individual recognized by an IFLA-registered professional body (or otherwise, as regulated by national law) working in the field of Landscape Architecture.

In the European Union, the "freedom of movement and the right of establishment and freedom to provide services" are considered very important. However, the national legislation in many European countries prevents Landscape Architects from practicing their profession. As such, it is crucial for the professional qualification in all member states to be at roughly the same educational and professional level [27]. The European Union, through Directive 2005/36/EC and Directive 89/48/EEC, states that *the recognition of professional qualifications by the host Member State shall allow beneficiaries to gain access in that Member State to the same profession as that for which they are qualified in the home Member State and to pursue it in the Member State under the same conditions as its nationals*. (Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council ([www.legislation.gov.uk/eudr/2005/36/article/4](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/eudr/2005/36/article/4)) (accessed on 10 March 2024)). The PQD (Professional Qualifications Directive) was modified in 2013, and the current version (2005/36/EG version 7.9.2014) defines the regulation and recognition of professions in the European Union with its main goal set at obtaining easier recognition and more mobility of professions among the member states. According to the third article of the PQD, the criteria for the acceptance of Landscape Architecture as a «regulated profession" are as follows: 1. legislative, regulatory, or administrative provision; 2. specific professional qualifications; 3. a protected title; and 4. the professional activity is regulated. It is essential to protect the title of the profession and keep it reserved for persons holding a given qualification, to have a state register for Landscape Architects based on qualifications and types of qualification, to identify if there are reserved activities for the profession, and if a specific qualification is required to exercise the reserved activities. According to the article, these points do not necessarily have to be met in their entirety.

Between 2012 and 2019, studies were conducted by the IFLA Europe members as part of the Professional Qualifications Directive (PQD) project [41–43].

In the meantime, more instruments were developed to facilitate the regulation of professions in Europe. One of them is the Directive on Proportionality Test before the adoption of a new regulation of professions (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2018/958/oj> (accessed on 10 March 2024)), which was accepted in June 2018. It proposes a proportionality test for every new regulation or an update of a regulation of professions that allows one to verify if the profession is not regulated too much. The aim is to facilitate the movement and activity of professionals by ensuring that the regulations in place are fit for purpose and not discriminatory or disproportional. Regulated professions are defined as professional activity(s) which are pursued by regulatory or administrative provisions to the possession of specific professional qualifications (s) (e.g., the use of a professional title) (Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council ([www.legislation.gov.uk/eudr/2005/36/article/3](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/eudr/2005/36/article/3) (accessed on 10 March 2024))). The profession is required to be regulated in at least one-third of the EU member states and to be able to use the PQD for the process of recognition. The profession is only regulated provided the country is on the official list and regulated at the national level.

Another instrument that facilitates regulation at the E.U. level, but mainly enhances the economic flow within a given economic sector is the Common Training Framework (CTF). Recently, the IFLA Europe and the Erasmus+ ‘InnoLAND’ project consortium developed a CTF for Landscape Architecture [44]. The goal was to provide a common understanding across Europe related to knowledge and skills needed to pursue the profession, stating what an individual is capable of knowing, understanding, and doing, supporting the mobility of professionals, rather than forcing the member states to regulate it with accordance to specific standards. According to Hayter and Miller [45], a global system of Landscape Architects’ registration is now perceived as extremely important, especially in places where Landscape Architects, despite possessing their particular qualifications and competencies, remain not recognized as a profession which is different to other design disciplines [45].

Regarding the profession of a Landscape Architect in Europe, it is currently regulated at the EU level in 13 countries (published in the EC database of regulated professions), in 2 countries only at the national level, while in 22 countries the profession is still not regulated [46]. However, the multidisciplinary nature of the profession and the ability to cooperate with other sectors in the design process are most essential skills of the landscape architect profession [25]. Unfortunately, in many countries, Landscape Architects’ work is not considered as important as that of Engineers due to its quality or amount and the fact that it does not affect public welfare. That is why many scholars have proposed for Landscape Architects to become a sub-group of Architects [47] and secure a form of registration under the responsible legal body (e.g., Chamber), or to have separate laws of registration for Architects and L.A.s for the better future functionality of both. Regarding the title of Landscape Architect, according to Walker, conflicts or confusion might occur due to the use of the word “Architect”. Lastly, demonstrating barriers to mobility is likely to provide one of the most significant challenges based on the evidence that has already been sought. Therefore, mapping the regulation and education status of the profession in all the member states and defining the competent authorities is very important.

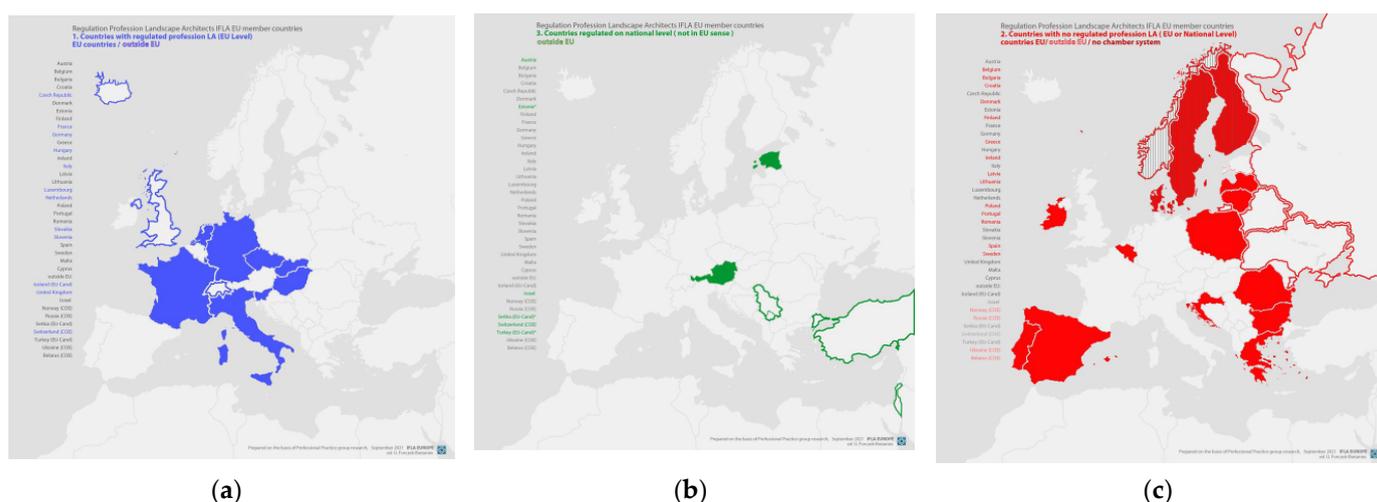
This paper aims to address the above issues, more precisely to map the status and factors affecting the regulation process across Europe, as well as investigate the role of legislation and legal recognition regarding Landscape Architect’s services, their professional title, and mobility. The importance of this research lies in presenting the critical role of regulation, but also in delving more deeply into the future actions that European Member states should focus on for professional recognition. Lastly, the main research questions that this paper aims to answer are as follows:

1. Does the profession have its own specificities that form the basis for its regulation?
2. Does the legal recognition of the profession make the professional environment of Landscape Architects stronger, and does it provide better job opportunities?

### 3. Is legislation the catalyst factor determining the professional recognition?

## 2. Materials and Methods

The research is based on “Professional Recognition Assistance survey” which was conducted in 2021 by the authors on behalf of the European Region of the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA Europe). A total of 31 out of 34 member countries responded and filled out the survey, which represents 91% of the total number of IFLA Europe Members National Associations. The answers were provided by 16 countries where the profession is not regulated (Figure 1c) and 15 countries (Figure 1a,b) where it is regulated.



**Figure 1.** (a) Map showing the countries where the Landscape Architecture profession is regulated at EU level; (b) Map showing the countries where the Landscape Architecture profession is regulated at national level, outside the EU; (c) Map showing the countries where the Landscape Architecture profession is NOT regulated at European or national level.

The state of Landscape Architecture professional regulation (Table 1) varies across Europe since in 13 countries, the profession is regulated at the EU level, in 5 countries it is regulated only at the national level, and in 19 countries it remains not regulated. Until today, the group of countries with a regulated profession comprises the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Slovakia, Slovenia, Iceland, Switzerland (Geneva Region), the United Kingdom, Austria, Estonia, Serbia, and Turkey. The group of countries with non-regulated status comprises Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Russia, and Ukraine. Ukraine did not respond to the survey request.

The methodology consisted of the following basic steps:

- a. Literature review: A short literature review of the most recent and relevant research of mapping the profession and studies undertaken by IFLA Europe. As such, our survey is a continuation of the first studies as part of the Professional Qualifications Directive (PQD) project conducted by IFLA Europe from 2012 to 2019 [41–43]. In 2019, a report on the professional recognition of landscape architects was prepared by Michael Oldham as part of the Council of Europe’s work program for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention. Subsequently, a Professional Requirements and Education Possibilities (PREP) Survey/IFLA Database project was initiated at IFLA World level by Carlo Bruschi and Andreja Tutundzic to provide information on existing landscape architecture programs and professional practice requirements across Europe. Finally, a survey was launched in the Nordic countries, where the

professional system is based on direct legal ties and social recognition of the landscape architecture profession.

- b. Composition of the research survey: It took into consideration the requirements that arose from the studies of the literature review. It was sent to all the Delegates of the National Associations (34 IFLA EUROPE members) in July 2020 (Supplementary Material). It was composed in a Word format and divided into two sections regarding the status of the profession, i.e., regulated and not regulated.

The first three questions of the survey were related to the profile and the role of the National Associations of Landscape Architects in the country's decision-making processes and the status of the activities undertaken towards empowering the profession. The fourth question dealt with the current condition of the profession and the basis as well as obstacles for practicing the profession. The fifth question concerned the issue of mobility and the difficulties associated with it. All questions were sent via email to each National Association and separate interviews were conducted, if needed, for the authors to better understand the answers given.

- c. Collection and processing of data: The data were collected from the questionnaires filled out by the National Associations and compiled into separate documents for the regulated and non-regulated countries. The information was gradually collected in several calls between July 2020 and June 2021. A statistical analysis was created using the Microsoft Excel 365 program. The results for each question represent written answers provided by the Delegates. The percentages of the results are based on the total number of answers per question.

However, this paper focuses on those related to the research questions and presents a further comparative analysis among the countries where the profession is regulated and non-regulated.

**Table 1.** State of regulation of the profession in IFLA Europe member states as of 24 September 2021 based on the IFLA EUROPE PRA survey (September 2020–September 2021).

LP.	EU/Outside EU	Profession of Landscape Architect Regulated		Profession of Landscape Architect Not Regulated	
		Existence of Chamber System	Nonexistence of Chamber System	Regulated on the EU Level	Regulated on the National Level
1.	EU	Czech Republic	Austria	Belgium	Denmark
2.		France	Estonia	Bulgaria	Finland
3.		Germany		Croatia	Sweden
4.		Hungary		Greece	
5.		Italy		Ireland	
6.		Luxembourg		Latvia	
7.		The Netherlands		Lithuania	
8.		Slovakia		Poland	
9.		Slovenia		Portugal	
10.				Romania	
11.				Spain	
1.	Outside EU	Iceland	Israel	Russia	Norway
2.		Switzerland (Geneva Region)	Serbia	Ukraine	
3.		United Kingdom	Turkey		

### 3. Results

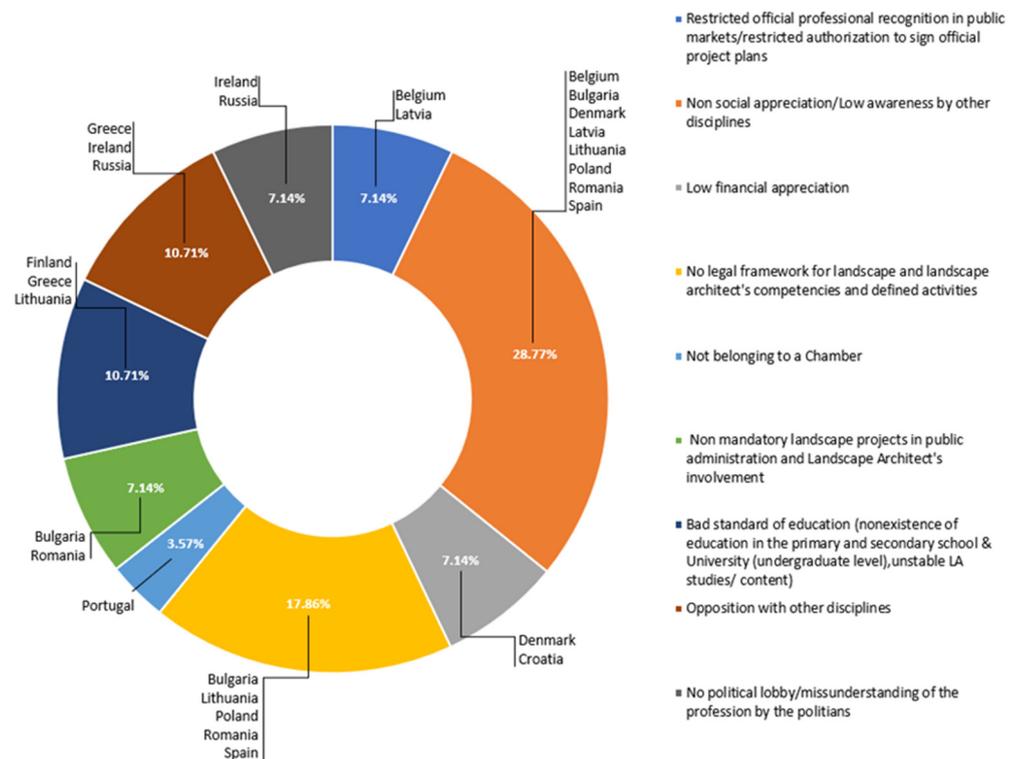
#### 3.1. The Status of the Regulation Process of Landscape Architecture in Europe

The status of the regulation process varies among countries in Europe. Among the participants, the answer to this question came mainly from the countries where the profession remains not regulated or has recently been regulated (Table 2). Most of the countries specified some of the main priority factors affecting the regulation process there (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Factors affecting the regulation process in several European countries.

Countries/ Factors	Education (Master or/and Bach- elor)/Qualif. System	Belonging to a Chamber/ National Examination Process	Social Apprecia- tion/High Quality Knowledge	Discussion/ Lobbying with the relevant Ministries	Relation with the Building Legislation	Professional License/Prof. Activities Defined/ Prof. State Register	Individual Council for Landscape Architects	Conflict with Other Disciplines (e.g., Architects)	Long and Difficult Ac- creditation National Procedure
Belgium				x				x	
Bulgaria				x		x			x
Croatia		x						x	
Czech Republic		x			x				
Denmark	x								
Estonia	x				x				
Finland			x						
Greece	x	x		x				x	
Hungary						x			
Ireland				x	x			x	
Latvia	x					x		x	
Lithuania						x			x
Norway			x			x			
Poland									x
Portugal							x		
Romania				x					
Russia						x			x
Serbia	x								
Spain				x				x	
Sweedden			x			x			
Turkey						x			
U.K.	x					x			

As a result, in many countries, the profession is practiced based on a certification issued by the Chamber of Architects (e.g., Bulgaria) or by professional standards (e.g., Latvia), or through legal possibilities of obtaining a project manager license, among other disciplines for Green Planting projects (e.g., Lithuania). In Scandinavian countries, the profession is not regulated. However, the position of Landscape Architects is strong there (Sweden), and Landscape Architects are able to obtain confirmation of their qualifications and practice the profession (Denmark, Norway). The factor of lobbying and influencing the institutions responsible for regulations is declared by 75% of respondents for the non-regulated countries, 21.43% of whom declared establishing a working group lobbying the matter, 42.86% declared having contacted the Ministry or the Chamber of Architects, and 7.14% declared initiating talks with institutions responsible for regulations. The remaining answers (28.77%) concern taking measures to recognize the status of the profession and establish contact with other institutions to regulate it. Education and training for high-quality knowledge, as well as Landscape Architect's tasks in building law and clear definitions of professional activities, are among the crucial factors mentioned. Conflicts with other disciplines cannot be underestimated, as well as the lengthy and challenging national accreditation procedure. One of the main reasons for the unsatisfactory professional situation of Landscape Architects in countries where the profession is not regulated is the leadership on projects by architects and the low recognition of Landscape Architects (21.88%), the absence of a legal framework for the Landscape Architects' activity, confusion with other professions, such as gardeners, and the competitiveness with similar professions, such as engineers and agronomists–foresters (Scheme 1).

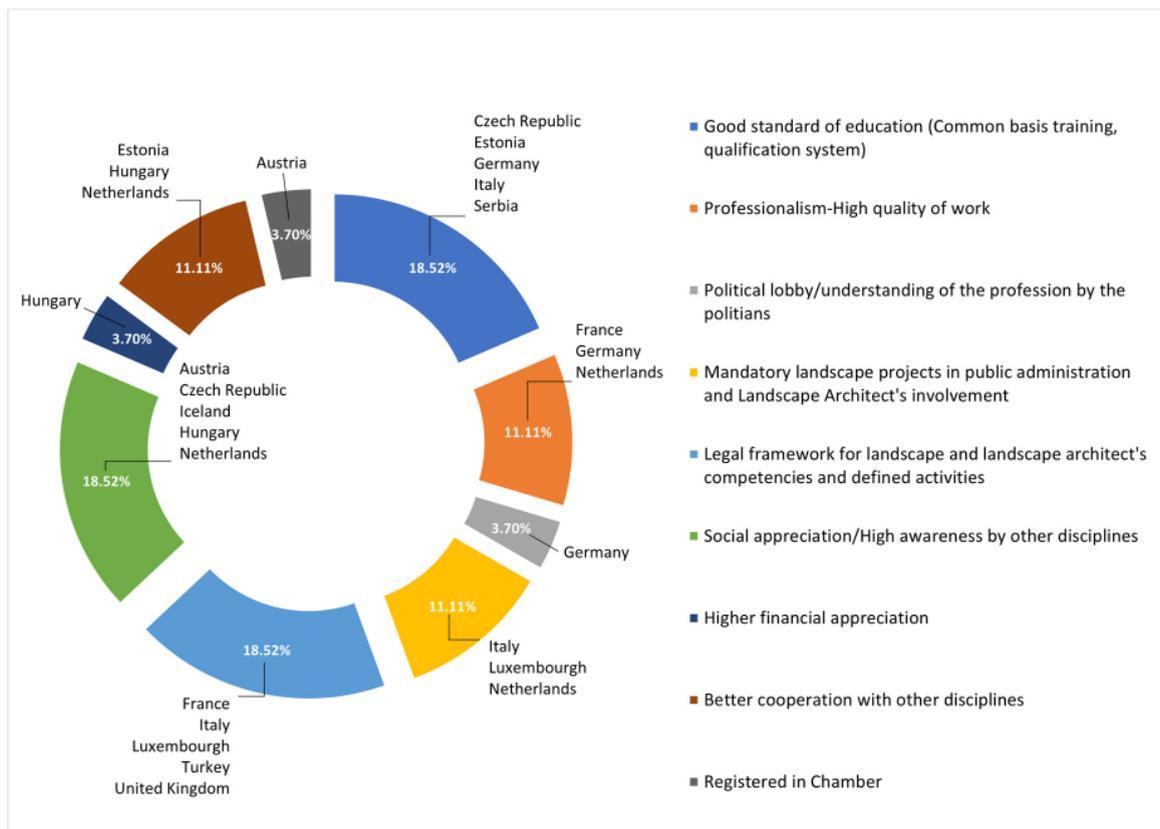


**Scheme 1.** The main reasons for the unsatisfactory professional situation of Landscape Architects in countries where the profession is not regulated.

Similar answers were provided by the countries where the profession is already regulated:

1. Joining the Chamber of Architects or Engineers—20.83%.
2. Regulation based on education and practice—16.67%.
3. License per field of expertise requirement—12.50%.
4. Creating an influential lobby in Parliament—12.50%.
5. Recognition of the Landscape Architect's title as an academic one—8.33%.
6. Obtaining solid political support from the Ministry responsible for landscape policies—12.50%.
7. Writing down the title to enshrine in the Architects' law—12.5%.

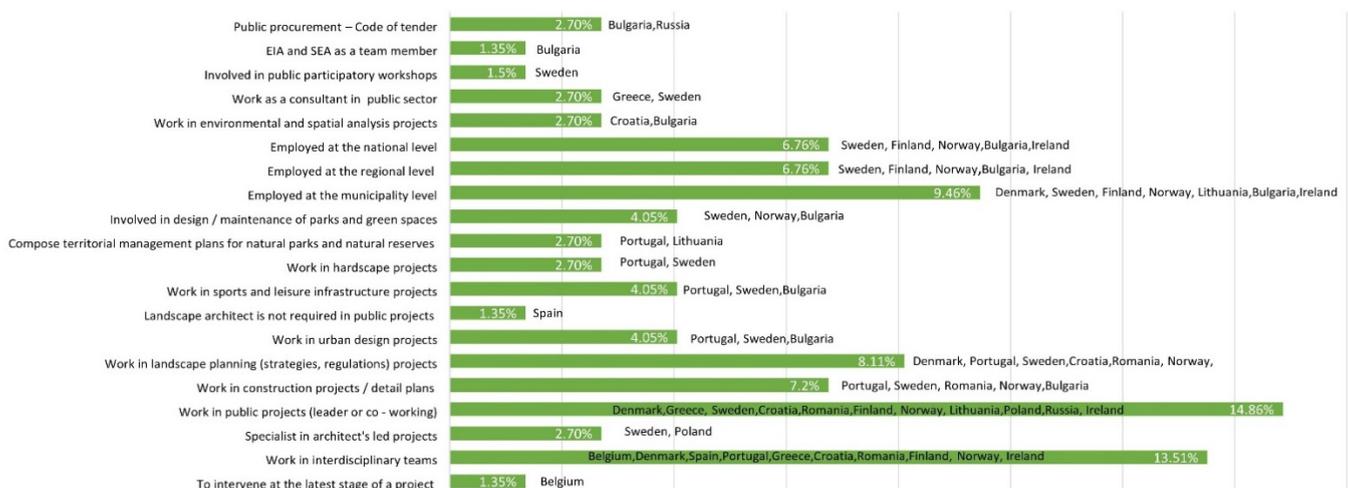
It is obvious that the legislative and cultural specificities of each country, as well as the establishment of a strong educational background in Landscape Architecture, are determining factors for the regulation process (Scheme 2). The most popular answers for the satisfactory or unsatisfactory professional situation in European countries are common basic training (11.11%) and the protection of professional competencies as well as social appreciation (18.52%). Lastly, most countries in which the profession is not regulated define the education of a Landscape Architect as the basis for their profession (65.39% (42.31% Master in Landscape Architecture, 23.08% Bachelor and Master in Landscape Architecture)), and then becoming a member of the Association (with 7.69% passing a professional exam and obtaining a license). In regulated countries, the basis depends on the form of the regulation. In most cases, 23.53% of the answers mention "registration in the relevant Chamber"; while 17.65% mention education and practice, 11.76% taking a professional exam, and 11.76% the recognition of a diploma.



**Scheme 2.** Three main reasons for the good–better–reasonable professional situation of Landscape Architects in countries where the profession is regulated.

### 3.2. Landscape Architects’ Services in European Countries and the Role of National Legislation

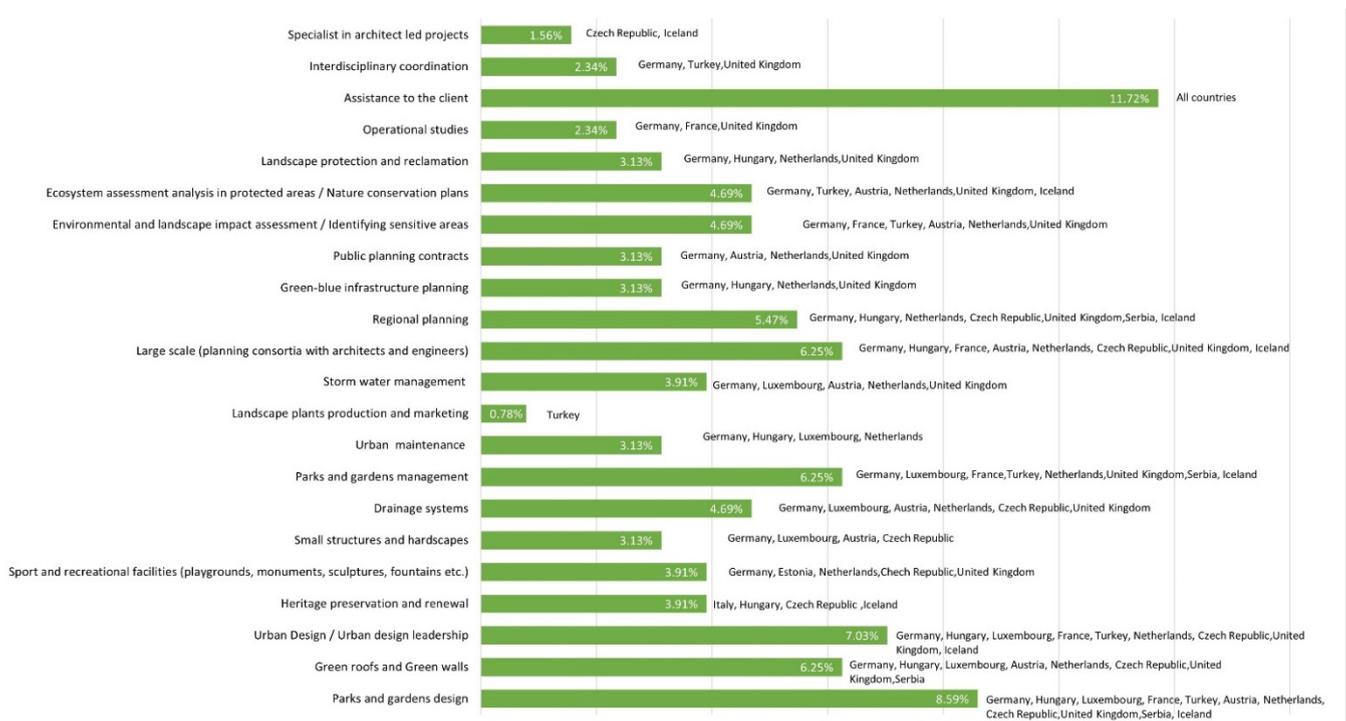
The distinctions of the services of Landscape Architects among other disciplines, as well as the related legislation that defines them, are also important factors affecting the regulation of the profession. The situation of the profession in individual countries is very different. In countries where the profession is non-regulated, Landscape Architects are required for specific types of projects and tasks, such as involvement in interdisciplinary teams or for co-working in public projects, in planning teams, developing strategies and regulations, and working as consultants for municipal, regional, or national public authorities (Scheme 3).



**Scheme 3.** Landscape Architects’ services in countries where profession is not regulated.

However, the social appreciation of the landscape architects' work and ability to conduct landscape architectural projects is, for some countries, such as the Nordic ones, a substitute for the regulation of the profession and thus influences its strong position.

A great deal of services are reported in countries with regulated professions. The results occurred directly on the list of tasks assigned to the Landscape Architect profession (Germany, France, Estonia, and the UK). The most frequently mentioned activities include Park and Garden design, Urban design, Green roofs and green walls, Park and Garden management, large-scale Planning Consortia, Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA), Landscape Impact Assessments (LIA), regional planning, drainage systems, and first and foremost, assisting the client (Scheme 4).



**Scheme 4.** The role of Landscape Architect's profession in countries where it is regulated.

In relation to previous responses, the tasks are better-defined, ranking from Landscape Design to Planning and Management. Based on the research, it can be concluded that the profession is recognized and in-demand. The popularity and use of specialists may be based on the specificity of their education.

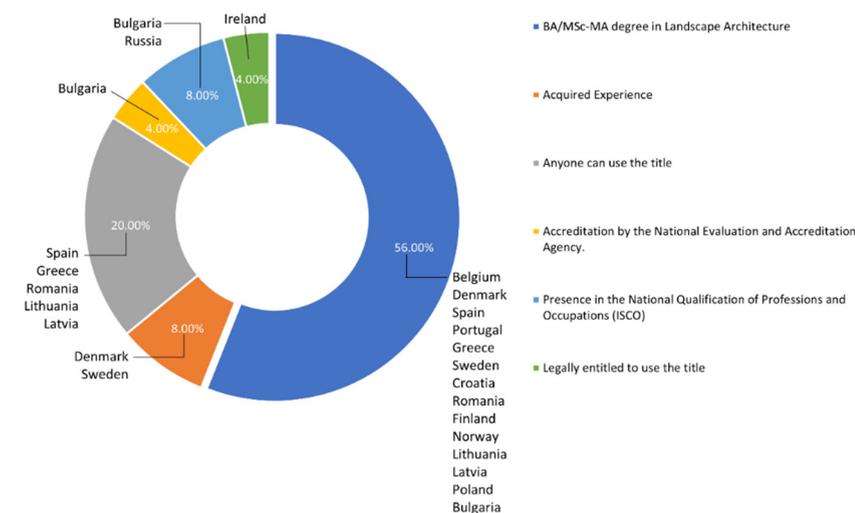
When the participants were asked questions regarding the most fundamental laws affecting their Landscape Architecture services, their responses focused on laws related to Urbanism and Landscape Planning, Building and Engineers' definition of services, as well as the Public Procurement Law as the most popular ones, and the Environmental Biodiversity law, Cultural heritage, Authorship laws, and E.L.C. as the less popular ones (Table 3). This is self-explanatory since the profession is very closely linked with engineering professions, and it constitutes a bridge between various specialists and engineers in the design process.

**Table 3.** Most basic laws establishing/affecting Landscape Architects’/Landscape Architecture services.

Countries/ Factors	Law in the Scope of Urbanism/ Landscape Planning	Law of Engineer’s Definition of Services	Plan/Building/ Environmental Law	Public Procure- ment Law	Law on Cultural Heritage	Law on Staff Remunera- tion from Public Funds	Landscape Convention	Law on Authorship	Biodiversity Law
Austria		x	x	x					
Bulgaria	x	x	x	x					
Croatia	x		x						
Czech Republic			x						
Estonia			x						
Finland				x					
France			x						x
Germany		x							
Greece		x		x					
Iceland			x					x	
Latvia									
Lithuania									
Netherlands		x							
Norway			x						
Poland			x						
Portugal	x								
Romania	x	x			x	x			
Serbia			x						
Slovenia		x	x						
Sweden			x	x					
Turkey			x	x	x		x		

3.3. The Title of Landscape Architect

In general, all non-regulated countries confirm the existence of the title, mainly referring to the academic one. In order to receive the title, all countries require adequate education (Bachelor’s or /and Master’s Degree) in Landscape Architecture and some require proof of two years of professional experience. In some, extra exams are also required and passing a VAE (Validation of Acquired Experience), which is available in a higher school of Landscape Architecture in order to obtain the title (Scheme 5).

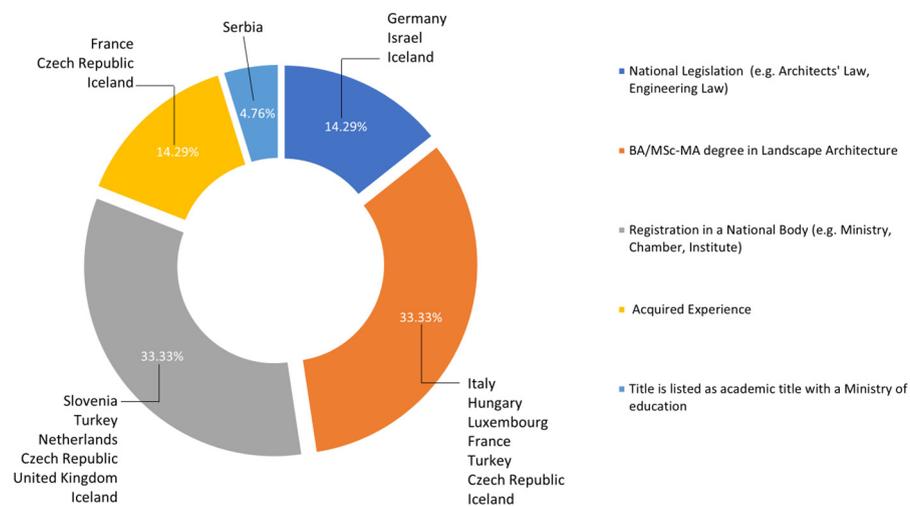


**Scheme 5.** The basis for using the title of Landscape Architect in countries where the profession is not regulated.

Other preconditions include knowledge of the relevant law, constitutional and administrative law, professional knowledge, as well as passing a chamber exam proofing test. Several National Associations mention laws (e.g., The Architect title in The Netherlands) protecting the title of a Landscape Architect. However, numerous countries where the

profession remains not regulated claim that a high number of duties and responsibilities of Landscape Architects is included in the legal regulation of building architects and that most of the Landscape Architects' activities are assigned to other disciplines.

Regarding the professional title in all non-regulated countries, it is neither protected nor recognized. In countries with a regulated status (Scheme 6), the basis for using the title is governed by the law, the Architect's or Engineer's Law, as well as being a member of a National Body in the form of a Chamber, Institute, or other (47.62%). In addition, the basis for the use of the title may be evidence of acquired experience (e.g., France) or education. In both cases, legislation plays a vital role regarding the title of Landscape Architects. The lack of a legal framework for practicing the profession and using the title, as well as poor social awareness of the tasks related to it, are among the primary obstacles. Both groups declared competitiveness with other professions (22.22% non-regulated and 24% for regulated countries) and the poor recognition of the Landscape Architecture profession and its actual scope of activities (29.63% for the non-regulated and 15% for the regulated countries).



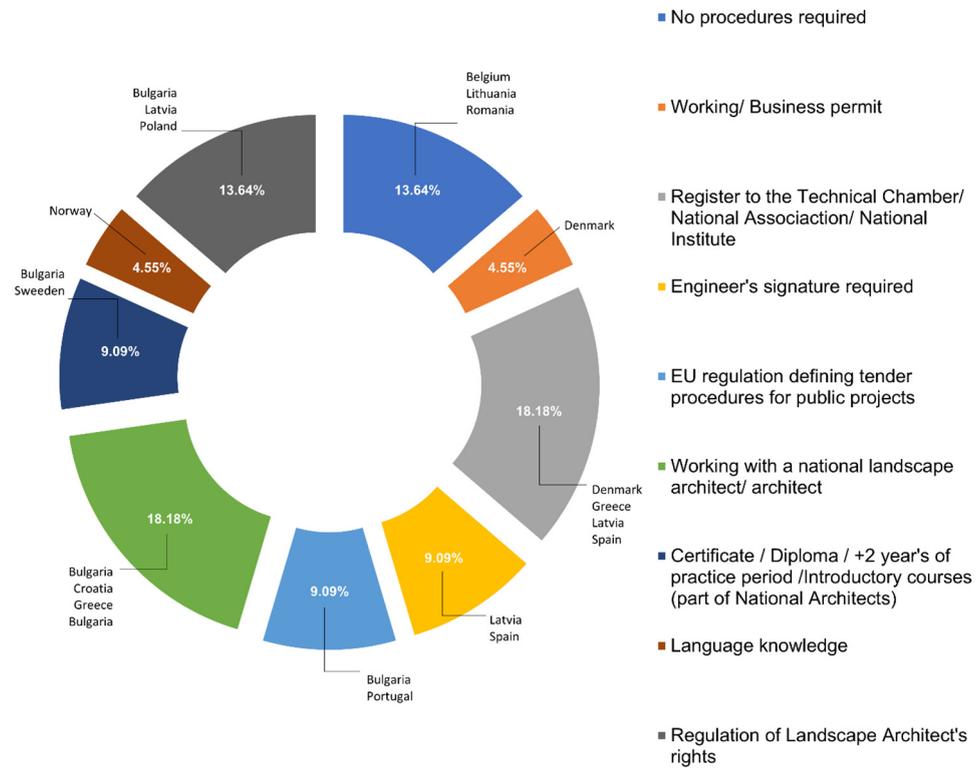
**Scheme 6.** The basis for using the title of Landscape Architect in countries where the profession is regulated.

### 3.4. The Status of Mobility

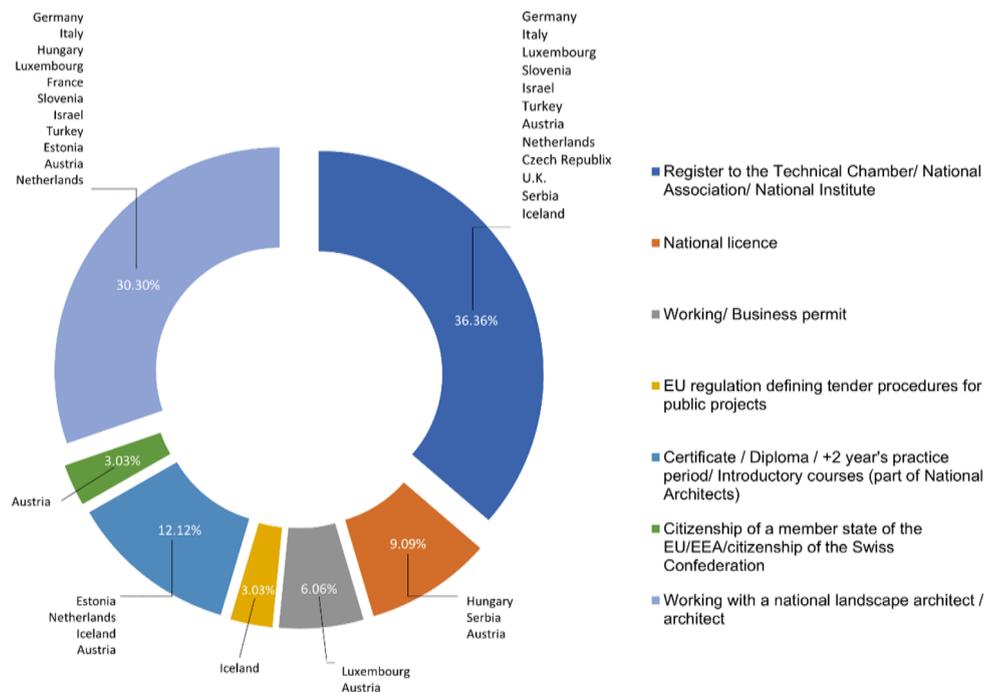
Regarding the status of mobility, in non-regulated countries (Scheme 7), the most popular answers demonstrate that no extra procedures are required for a foreign Landscape Architect to work on public Landscape Architecture projects. However, the engineer's signature is obligatory in such projects, and working with a local Landscape Architect will help overcome any practical obstacles (language barrier) and legislation issues (technical standards). Additionally, in countries where the profession is regulated (Scheme 8), the recognition of the title by the Chamber of Architects and registration with a professional order are the most popular answers. Additionally, all the professional requirements (citizenship, certificate or diploma, business permit, etc.) are also required. However, all the above obstacles are overcome by cooperation with a National Landscape Architect (30.30%). In both cases, registration in a Chamber and working with a National Landscape Architect/Architect are the most popular ones. Regarding the latter, many obstacles are overcome, and the problem of mobility is hidden.

As far as the obstacles or problems are concerned, in countries where the profession is not regulated, a foreign Landscape Architect might encounter language problems (22.22%), the same problems as a native Landscape Architect (14.18%), or insufficient knowledge of legal provisions (11.11%) (Scheme 9). Regarding the countries where the profession is regulated (Scheme 10), obstacles are similar, with a significant percentage claiming that there are none. The above answers are almost expected since most Landscape Architects

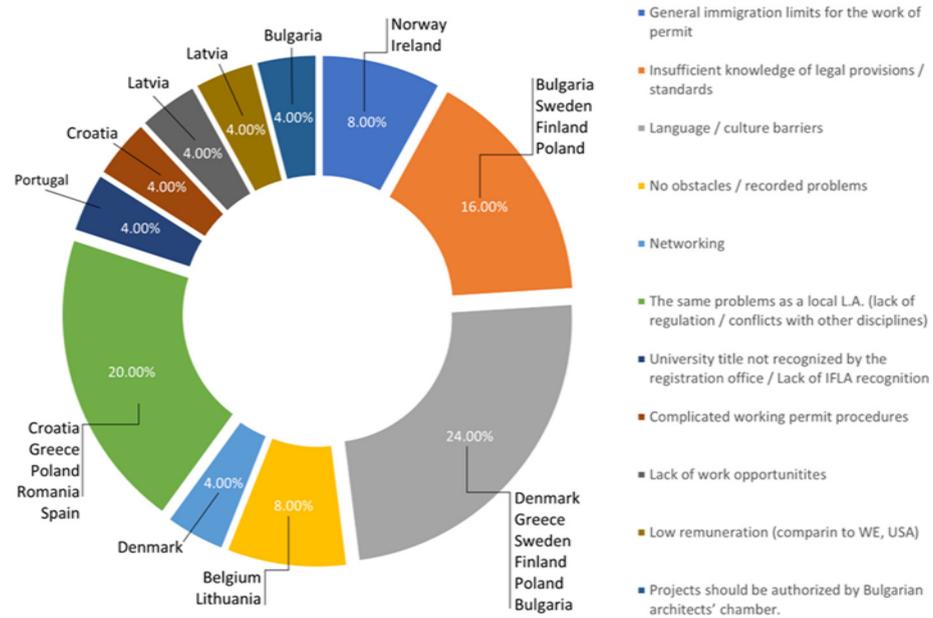
work in big architecture or planning companies, and unemployment due to mobility difficulties does not exist.



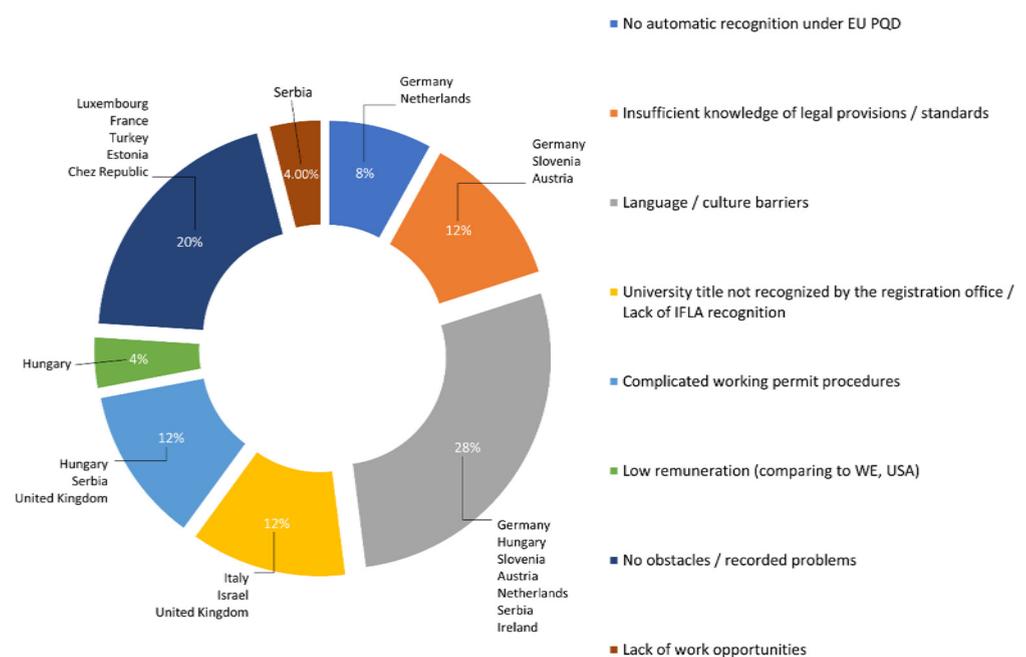
**Scheme 7.** Requirements for a landscape architect to exercise professional activity in another country. Countries where the profession is not regulated.



**Scheme 8.** Requirements for a landscape architect to exercise professional activity in another country. Countries where the profession is regulated.



**Scheme 9.** The obstacles a landscape architect encounters when working in another country. Countries where the profession is not regulated.



**Scheme 10.** The obstacles a landscape architect encounters when working in another country. Countries where the profession is regulated.

#### 4. Discussion

##### 4.1. Does the Profession Have Its Own Specificity That Forms the Basis for Its Regulation?

The field of Landscape Architecture is a new face of creative design embedded in environmental and social conditions. The challenges of the 19th century requiring an approach in the spirit of sustainable development, using nature-based solutions in cooperation with society, constitute the framework of the profession of landscape architecture, which has gradually found its field of activity. There is clear specialization here compared to its beginnings, described by F. L. Olmsted as “the new art of urban order” [20], developed in the process of responding to specific challenges. This occurred once with a change in the

approach to post-industrial areas and the need to treat the environment and mitigate the impact on the environment, etc. The reclamation of post-industrial areas and their canon developed by Richard Haag and Peter Latz [21–23], designing in harmony with nature [24], river restoration in the latest global projects, or models of the revitalization of abandoned city centers constitute the legacy of Landscape Architecture as an individual design method. As Ellen Braae writes, Landscape Architects accept the actions of nature in their approach, not only by making them the inspiration for their projects, but by continuing them [25]. This individual feature of the profession is contained in its unique specificity, which allows it to be easily distinguished among other design methods. The gradual development of the profession and its creative enrichment through design provide a clear shape that requires recording and sanctioning.

Contemporary challenges related to the climate crisis change the context of design conditions. However, attaching importance to beauty and harmony in design constitutes the identity of this profession [48] and distinguishes it from other related ones, such as environmental engineering, horticulture, agriculture, etc.

If anything is to be accomplished between Landscape Architecture and related disciplines, it is the need for a dialogue, a spirit of understanding, and mutual respect [40]. For the future of the profession, it is important for Landscape Architects to create networks with other professionals (spatial planners, architects, urbanists, environmentalists, geographers, civil society organizations, regional and national governments, etc.) and to develop the language and graphic skills along with providing demonstration projects to achieve their aspirations. With respect to the Landscape Convention, it is important to recognize and integrate the landscape into regional and town planning policies and promote the promulgation of legislation in favor of environmental and landscape protection and conservation, which will include financial tools and flexible managerial systems capable of coping with new climatic manifestations as well as reasserting collective interests.

At this point, legislation could play a vital role by recognizing Landscape Architects' competencies and defining their professional activity. In order to respond to future challenges, this profession requires specific education, and there is an increasing demand for this type of services on the labor market.

#### *4.2. Does Legal Recognition of the Profession Strengthen the Professional Environment of Landscape Architects and Provide Better Employment Opportunities?*

As the research has shown, the situation of the profession in Europe is very diverse. Interestingly, the position is only partially related to the regulation status, and even in countries where it is regulated, Landscape Architects encounter obstacles in practicing the profession [49]. However, it remains recognized and in-demand. This is evidenced by the presence of Landscape Architects in specific professional activity, even in countries where it is not regulated. Recognizing it as a profession of public trust and imposing educational standards and procedures for obtaining the right to perform it seems to be the most adequate method. In order to obtain the degree, the vast majority of countries require appropriate education (Bachelor's and/or Master's degree) in Landscape Architecture, and some require proof of two years of professional experience. In some countries, an additional VAE (Validation of Acquired Experience) professional examination is also necessary. Here, a top-down regulation in the form of a CTF—a European-wide regulation of requirements for this profession—could help.

The popularity and use of specialists may be based on the specificity of their education. This constitutes a bridge between various specialists and engineers in the design process and combines the issues of beauty, usability, and durability in accordance with the Vitruvius principle, i.e., *firmitatis, utilitatis, venustatis* (durability, utility, and beauty). This unique balance and equilibrium between the features of an architectural and landscape work requires a specific education, a holistic one that includes elements of technical, environmental, and artistic knowledge. [22,23]. This multidisciplinary nature of the profession and the ability of a Landscape Architect to cooperate with other actors in the design process are

among the prerequisites for the future of the profession [50]. As such, legal recognition of the profession, allowing for a better involvement, and the development of a common language among disciplines will provide better employment opportunities.

#### *4.3. Is Legislation a Catalyst Factor for the Recognition of Professional Qualifications?*

However, the greatest impact on the position of the profession in countries, regardless of the degree of its regulation, is exerted by legal provisions assigning specific tasks to Landscape Architects. These tasks are formulated in legal regulations, and most often constitute the following: an Environmental Protection Law, an Engineering Definition of Services Law, a Public Procurement Law, and spatial planning acts. This way of taking note of and applying competencies is a positive start for regulations in countries that wish to strengthen the position of the profession. First of all, in this way, the profession is recognized, and requirements are introduced for investors or project teams to invite such professionals to their teams.

The social activity of Landscape Architects resulting from the survey is also worth emphasizing. Three-quarters of respondents from countries where the profession is not regulated declared that they are active in influencing the institutions responsible for regulation, and approximately one-fifth of countries has created a working group to lobby on this issue.

## **5. Conclusions**

The present work is one of the first to present a European overview of the landscape architecture profession in recent years. The study conducted demonstrates the profession's diverse situation and great dynamics. It can certainly be stated that this is a profession with a long tradition, a distinct specificity, and well-defined competencies. This is confirmed by its regulation in individual countries as well as its strong position in selected countries where the profession is not regulated.

However, considering the challenges of contemporary planning and design, the position of this profession in individual countries remains surprisingly uneven. The dynamic situation and the multitude of project topics in this field prompt a movement towards strengthening and equalizing the position of the profession. Although, overall, this position is gradually increasing, and the introduction of individual regulations in particular countries seems to be merely a matter of time; yet it depends on the local professional environment and the national situation related to landscape planning and design. The survey sheds a positive light on the efforts being made, since the title and profession exist in almost all countries. Currently, however, there is an increasing need for precise legal regulations regarding the protection of the title and the basis for practicing a profession in all countries.

When it comes to the importance of legal recognition for a profession, the starting point is education. Educational standards, professional tutoring, and a common training framework are essential for stabilizing the profession and its ability to adapt to the current labor market in the face of environmental and social challenges.

A lack of common rules indicates problems of mobility as well. Admittedly, Landscape Architects find alternative ways to practice; however, this does not promote the profession's growth. Future research into mobility complaints will support equal market access and advocate for European recognition.

In this context, legislation could play a crucial role by recognizing Landscape Architects' competencies and defining their professional field of work. Thanks to this, not only will the framework of the profession be defined and established, but its visibility and social perception will also be significantly enhanced. As the survey demonstrates the position of a profession, in addition to legal regulations, it is also influenced by the level of public awareness of its competencies. Regulated educational rules, the protection of professional competencies, and social awareness were enumerated as the reasons influencing the positive standing of the profession. Additionally, the legal recognition of the

profession, allowing for the better involvement and development of a common language among disciplines, will provide better employment opportunities.

For further actions aimed at legislation, a more specific mapping of the profession per country is needed: 1. the situation of employment, 2. the state of the regulation of the profession in the sense of Directive 2005/36/EC, 3. organization and training in relation to national legislation, 4. detailed characteristics of training programs, and 5. problems of mobility among different European countries.

The presented study provides original and unique information about the spectrum of the landscape architecture profession in individual European countries. The use of the IFLA Europe network creates a unique opportunity to reach sources and obtain original information, which, in the context of the diversified approach to regulating and practicing the profession in different countries, paints a characteristic picture of this profession. The aim of this study is to try to equalize opportunities, use good experiences, and, consequently, take action to support the efforts of individual countries. Therefore, the specific research aims to help all National Associations of Landscape Architects and individuals fighting for professional recognition, to present an overall picture of the profession, and to define specific aspects necessary for strategic development and professional recognition.

**Supplementary Materials:** The following supporting information can be downloaded at: <https://www.mdpi.com/article/10.3390/su16135362/s1>. The Supplementary Material is the questionnaire of the survey addressed to the delegates of national associations of IFLA EUROPE for the countries where the profession is regulated and the countries where the profession is not regulated.

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