

# The Walk of Peace from the Alps to the Adriatic – Heritage of the First World War

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/6077/>

## [Slovenia](#)

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**Criteria:** [\(ii\)](#)[\(vi\)](#)

**Category:** Cultural

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Gorenjska Region, Goriška Region, Obalno-kraška (The Littoral-Karst) Region

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## Description

1. The Walk of Peace (in Slovenian: Pot miru)

Log pod Mangartom: Štoln

GPS: 46.40485, 13.59631

UTM: 46°24'17.5"N 13°35'46.7"E

Gorjansko

GPS: 45.80457, 13.70899

UTM: 45°48'16.4"N 13°42'32.4"E

2. Vršič: Russian Chapel (in Slovenian: Ruska kapelica); Heritage Register Number

<http://rkd.situla.org/> - HRN #855

GPS: 46.4429, 13.7677

UTM: 46°26'34.4"N 13°46'03.7"E

3. Log pod Mangartom: WW1 Military Cemetery (in Slovenian: Avstro-ogrsko vojaško pokopališče iz prve svetovne vojne); HRN #409

GPS: 46.404223, 13.599363

UTM: 46°24'15.2"N 13°35'57.7"E

4. Kobarid (in Italian: Caporetto): Italian Charnel House (in Slovenian: Italijanska kostnica);

HRN #227

GPS: 46.247144, 13.584251

UTM: 46°14'49.7"N 13°35'03.3"E

5. Ladra: WW1 Military Chapel (in Slovenian: Italijanska vojaška kapela iz prve svetovne vojne); HRN #5074

GPS: 46.237127, 13.604304

UTM: 46°14'13.7"N 13°36'15.5"E

6. Zaprikraj: The Krn Range – Historical Area (in Slovenian: Krnsko pogorje – Zgodovinsko območje); HRN #7162

GPS: 46.293371, 13.613884

UTM: 46°17'36.1"N 13°36'50.0"E

7. Tolmin: German Charnel House (in Slovenian: Nemška kostnica); HRN #766

GPS: 46.175179, 13.732540  
UTM: 46°10'30.6"N 13°43'57.1"E

8. Mengore: WW1 Historical Area (in Slovenian: Zgodovinsko območje iz prve svetovne vojne); HRN #7165

GPS: 46.166621, 13.721516  
UTM: 46°09'59.8"N 13°43'17.5"E

9. Javorca: Memorial Church of the Holy Spirit (in Slovenian: Spominska cerkev sv. Duha); HRN #200

GPS: 46.2352, 13.7197  
UTM: 46°14'06.7"N 13°43'10.9"E

10. Sabotin: WW1 Historical Area (in Slovenian: Zgodovinsko območje iz prve svetovne vojne); HRN #15446

GPS: 45.99156, 13.631566 (hut), 45.982664, 13.643273 (top)  
UTM: 45°59'29.6"N 13°37'53.6"E (hut), 45°58'57.6"N 13°38'35.8"E (top)

11. Solkan: WW1 Military Cemetery (in Slovenian: Avstro-ogrsko vojaško pokopališče iz prve svetovne vojne); HRN #672

GPS: 45.97622, 13.64894  
UTM: 45°58'34.4"N 13°38'56.2"E

12. Bohinj Railway (in Slovenian: Bohinjska železnica); HRN #8117

Bohinjska Bistrica: Bohinj tunnel (in Slovenian: Bohinjski predor)

GPS: 46.26806, 13.95888  
UTM: 46°16'05.0"N 13°57'32.0"E

Bača pri Modreju: Railway bridge (in Slovenian: Železniški most)

GPS: 46.14425, 13.76816  
UTM: 46°08'39.3"N 13°46'05.4"E

Štanjel: Water pumping station at Podlazi (in Slovenian: Črpališče za vodo v Podlazih)

GPS: 45.83161, 13.84260  
UTM: 45°49'53.8"N 13°50'33.4"E

Nova Gorica: Railway station (in Slovenian: Železniška postaja)

GPS: 45.95531, 13.63482  
UTM: 45°57'19.1"N 13°38'05.3"E

Nova Gorica: Railway workshops (in Slovenian: Železniške delavnice)

GPS: 45.95926, 13.63922  
UTM: 45.95926, 13.63922

Nova Gorica: Water tower (in Slovenian: Vodni stolp)

GPS: 45.96029, 13.63957  
UTM: 45°57'37.0"N 13°38'22.4"E

Solkan: Railway bridge (in Slovenian: Železniški most)

GPS: 45.97882, 13.65184  
UTM: 45°58'43.8"N 13°39'06.6"E

13. Gorjansko: WW1 Military Cemetery (in Slovenian: Avstro-ogrsko vojaško pokopališče iz prve svetovne vojne); HRN #149

GPS: 45.80457, 13.70899  
UTM: 45°48'16.4"N 13°42'32.4"E

14. Črniče: WW1 Military Cemetery (in Slovenian: Avstro-ogrsko vojaško pokopališče iz prve svetovne vojne); HRN #86  
GPS: 45.90532, 13.77727  
UTM: 45°54'19.1"N 13°46'38.2"E

15. Štanjel: WW1 Military Cemetery (in Slovenian: Vojaško pokopališče iz prve svetovne vojne); HRN #229  
GPS: 45.82085, 13.84790  
UTM: 45°49'15.1"N 13°50'52.4"E

The mountainous region extending from the south-eastern edge of the Julian Alps down to the Gulf of Trieste had been for thousands of years a contact zone between East and West. In order to protect the Roman Empire a defence system, *Claustra Alpium Iuliarum*, was established. There the Langobards and the realm of Charlemagne spread their political and cultural power. Later the Isonzo (in Slovenian: Soča) River and its surrounding territory became the border area between the Republic of Venice and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It represented the western border of the Illyrian Provinces during the Napoleonic era. It became the western border of the Habsburg monarchy after 1866.

When Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary on 24 May 1915, military operations had already been waged through Europe for almost a year. The former allies opened another First World War battlefield in Europe – the South Western or Italian-Austrian front (May 1915 - November 1918). It was 600 km long and stretched from the Stelvio Pass on the Swiss-Italian-Austrian tripoint, across South Tyrol, Carnia, the Isonzo basin, and down to the Adriatic Sea. The most important battlefield along that line was the 90 km long southern branch of the front, called the Isonzo Front (*in Slovenian*: Soška fronta). It started in the Julian Alps, traversed the Banjšice Plateau and continued along the foot of the Karst (in Slovenian: Kras) Plateau to the Adriatic Sea at the mouth of the river Timavo (*in Slovenian*: Timav). The Austro-Hungarian troops consisted of soldiers of various nationalities (Austrians, Hungarians, Czechs, Moravians, Slovaks, Poles, Ukrainians, Russini, Slovenians, Croats, Bosnians, Serbs, Rumanians, Germans, Turks, etc.) and members of different religions (Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Muslim, Jewish, etc.). From June 1915 through October 1917 the Isonzo Front was the stage of 12 offensives. The historical events found their formal closure in new historical circumstances: in compliance with the Treaty of London of 1915 and the Treaty of Rapallo of 1920 state borders were redefined and new states were formed

Due to long-lasting operations, difficult Alpine terrain and mountain climate, the Isonzo Front was one of the most ferocious battlefields of the First World War. It drastically changed natural environment, devastated urban landscape together with local economy and brought about important demographic changes, so that the impact it made on the territory was dramatic and long-lasting and echoed throughout Europe.

The First World War has left a permanent imprint on that territory. Until today, abundant material heritage has been preserved along the former front line: fortresses, trenches, observation posts, transportation ways, cabins, natural and man-made caves, military cemeteries, charnel houses, chapels, monuments and memorials.

Over a span of a hundred years the remembrance of the “years of horror” has changed its perspective from the military to commemorative and peace-fostering collective and transnational remembrance. The vocabulary has been reintroduced which a hundred years ago disappeared from the sphere of human communication, but is nowadays automatic and self-evident.

Along its 320 km long course the Walk of Peace connects places of memory and sites of mourning. It also demonstrates the enduring human strength and striving for peace, humaneness, personal dignity and international cooperation. The Walk of Peace has thus become a landscape of memory, a walk through turbulent historical events, micro-worlds of an absurd war under the

burning sun of the Karst plateau, the snowy slopes of the Alps or the Dolomites, a walk past the chapels of that time, shrines and cemeteries with Christian crosses, Jewish tombstones or Muslim nišans, and a walk of meeting with personal names of too many fallen soldiers of many different nationalities and faiths. Along the Walk of Peace the past, the present and the future meet and convey a clear message of peace and tolerance.

### 1. The Walk of Peace (Pot miru)

The Walk of Peace interconnects the areas and people and rich cultural and natural heritage along the onetime Isonzo Front. It starts at Log pod Mangartom and leaves the territory of Slovenia at Gorjansko (see the map). Numerous remains have been left behind the Front which are now perfectly restored and maintained through the efforts of various institutions and societies. Military cemeteries, caves, trenches, charnel houses, chapels, monuments, historical sites and other memorials are part of significant material and intangible heritage of European history. Their testimony, mood and stories form the spine of today's Walk of Peace from the Julian Alps to the Adriatic. It is a memorial to all those who suffered during the First World War and a warning against wars which should never happen again. Above all it promotes the value of peace and the opportunities for common development. The Walk is uniformly marked and suitable for different groups of visitors.

### 2. Vršič: Russian Chapel

The wooden Russian Orthodox Chapel stands in the military cemetery on a slope above the road to the pass of Vršič. The construction of the road from Kranjska Gora across the pass of Vršič (1,611 m) to Trenta was started at the beginning of May 1915, when it was already clear that Italy was going to declare war on Austria-Hungary. 12,000 Russian POWs captured on the Eastern Front were transported to the site in order to build the road, which required superhuman efforts. They were lodged in simple cabins, they were ill fed and poorly clad, and many of them died of efforts and diseases. This road then served to supply the Austro-Hungarian troops on the Isonzo Front and to transport the wounded from the front. It could already be used for transport at the end of 1915. Because snow was very abundant in March 1916, a major avalanche triggered from the slopes of Mt. Mojstrovka and engulfed several hundreds of builders. To the memory of their suffering and numerous dead fellows the Russian POWs built a wooden chapel with a saddle roof and a minor altar inside. This little Orthodox Church is now restored and is known as the Russian Chapel. Next to it stands a tomb topped with a pyramid which bears an inscription in Russian: "To the Sons of Russia".

### 3. Log pod Mangartom: WW1 Military Cemetery

The Austro-Hungarian cemetery was arranged already in the first year of the First World War as the valley of the Koritnica River was sufficiently remote from the direct fights. It is placed on a slope next to the civil cemetery behind the village church. There are more than 800 graves in the cemetery; the most numerous are those of the soldiers of the 4<sup>th</sup> Bosnian-Herzegovinian Infantry Regiment (BHIR 4). Today, all the graves are marked with crosses or typical Muslim headstones nišans and furnished with identification plaques. In the centre of the cemetery a colossal monument, a work by Ladislav Kofránek of Prague, was erected already during the war. It features a pair of soldiers, with their eyes fixed on the peak of Mt. Rombon, where the majority of those who are buried here were killed. Engraved into the monument are abbreviations of the Austro-Hungarian units that fought in this area and a dedicatory inscription in German, Serbo-Croatian and Slovenian languages. It is one of the best preserved military cemeteries in Slovenia of that time.

At Log pod Mangartom the mosque was built in November 1916 by the soldiers of the 4<sup>th</sup> Bosnian-Herzegovinian Infantry Regiment (BHIR 4). The wooden construction with a dome

and a rectangular minaret was enclosed by a stone wall and a fence with elaborately designed gate. The building only survives in old photos.

#### 4. Kobarid (*in Italian*: Caporetto): Italian Charnel House

On the hill-top stands a church which was consecrated to St. Anthony as early as 1696. Burial grounds are organized in the form of three octagons concentrically tapering towards the top of the hill. The charnel house was designed by the Milanese sculptor Giannino Castiglioni and the architect Giovanni Greppi. The complex was ceremonially opened in September 1938, after almost three years of construction works. Transferred to the charnel house were remains of 7,014 known and unknown Italian soldiers who had been killed in the First World War and originally buried in different military cemeteries in the surroundings. Their names are engraved in the slabs of greenish serpentine. In 1981 several memorials dedicated to Italian soldiers who died in the gas attack during the Twelfth Isonzo Battle in the Bovec area and were formerly located in the military cemetery at Bovec were moved to the Charnel House in Kobarid. Along the road from the centre of Kobarid to the Church of St. Anthony stand the fourteen Stations of the Cross. In the former custodian's house next to the charnel house a private museum collection 'Kobarid in the Great War 1917' is now on display.

#### 5. Ladra: Italian WW1 Military Chapel

A smaller Italian WW1 military chapel was built in the years 1916–1917 and served outdoor religious ceremonies. It is the first known work by architect Giovanni Michelucci (1891–1990). The chapel is made of worked stone, its windows in the south and north walls terminate in pointed arches on the top, and it has a steep saddle roof with a minor belfry. The pulpit is attached to the southeast corner.

#### 6. Zaprikraj: The Krn Range – Historical Area

The Krn Range is a high-mountain world where battles between the Italian and the Austro-Hungarian armies took place, in particular in 1915–1916. The former battlefield still abounds in material remains – trenches, caves, monuments, memorial plaques, etc. The historical area of Zaprikraj is located along the Italian first line of defence, between the alpine pastures Predolina and Zaprikraj, above the village of Drežniške Ravne. The circular path tracks well preserved and only partly reconstructed positions of the Italian Army. It leads through trenches, caves, gun- and mortar positions, and past the remains of cabins.

#### 7. Tolmin: German Charnel House

On the location of the former military cemetery with 931 graves a charnel house was built by the German state in 1936–1938. The new building received mortal remains of about 1,000 German soldiers who were killed during the Twelfth Isonzo Battle. It is the only location in the area of the Isonzo Front where a larger number of German soldiers are buried. This significant cultural-historical and architectural monument is constructed of stone blocks and has a steep pent roof. From a porch the entrance leads into the central part of the monument, the chapel. The interior of the chapel is divided with a wrought-iron latticework into two compartments. In the first one, the names of the fallen soldiers are inscribed on oak slabs, and in the other in a gilded mosaic. In the centre of the room, there is a tomb of the Unknown Soldier, upon which a sunray falls only at the summer solstice. Below this room there is a sepulchre with the relics of the fallen. The charnel house is enclosed with a stone wall and is accessible through an iron gate, made of Austrian and Italian barrels.

#### 8. Mengore: WW1 Historical Area

A circular path through the historical area of Mengore runs past well-preserved and partly cleaned and restored remains of the first Austro-Hungarian line of defence. It tracks trenches,

caves, memorial tablets, remains of cabins' stone walls, a water reservoir and the monument of the onetime Austro-Hungarian military cemetery. On the top of Mengore hill, from where a splendid view of the Isonzo valley opens, stands a church, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, which was practically levelled during the fights along the Isonzo River.

#### 9. Javorca: Memorial Church of the Holy Spirit

From March through October 1916 the soldiers of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Austro-Hungarian Mountain Brigade built a wooden sanctuary in a sheltered valley in the rear of the most important fighting positions of the Brigade on the Isonzo front line. Encircled by the high peaks of the Julian Alps it was erected in eternal memory of their fallen comrades who had lost their lives in the surrounding mountains. Most of these soldiers are buried in the military cemetery at Loče near Tolmin. The lower part of the church is made of blocks of stone, which the soldiers quarried in the near vicinity. The upper, wooden part of the construction, with valuable applications of Alpine and Scandinavian rural architecture, rests on a massive stone wall. A bell tower rises above the entrance, with a sundial and a fresco of the dual coat-of-arms of Austro-Hungary and the large inscription *Pax* (Peace) and *Indivisibiliter ac inseparabiliter* (Indivisible and inseparable). During the Italian reconstruction works of 1934 an inscription was added: *Ultra cineres hostium ira non superest* (Beyond the enemies' ashes anger subsides). Through a low wooden porch a visitor continues the way to the rectangular church nave and the three-sided presbytery with the altar in the form of a cross with a mosaic image of the dove of the Holy Spirit. Burnt in the oak boards are 2,565 names of the dead comrade soldiers. The church was built in the typical Art-Nouveau style of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to the plan of the Viennese architect Remigius Geyling (1878-1974), a prominent member of the Vienna Secession group. The wooden part of the altar is a work by the South Tyrolese Anton Perathoner of St. Ulrich.

The memorial chapel was dedicated to the Holy Spirit, the liturgical symbol of peace, wisdom and love. The shrine was a place of worship and meditation for everyone. During the war, a Mass was celebrated for the soldiers every Sunday. Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox believers, Jews, Muslims and atheists would harmoniously come to the church, where all of them sought for spiritual power and solace. Still nowadays, the memorial church reminds visitors of the horrors of the war and at the same time calls for reconciliation and for inner and everlasting peace.

The Javorca Memorial Church of the Holy Spirit has been declared a monument of national importance. Within the frame of the EU intergovernmental initiative (which ceased in 2011) it was awarded the European Heritage Label in 2007.

#### 10. Sabotin: WW1 Historical Area

Due to its position, Mt. Sabotin was an important strategic point in the defence of Gorizia (in Slovenian: Gorica). The Austro-Hungarian soldiers built caves, shelters, observation posts, a system of fighting positions there. From there they repelled the attacks by the Italian infantry until the Sixth Isonzo Battle. The Italian conquest of Mt. Sabotin, Kalvarija and Gorizia in August 1916 meant the collapse of the so-called Gorizia bridgehead on the right bank of the Soča (in Italian: Isonzo). Today, the area of Mt. Sabotin is arranged as a Park of Peace; the most interesting are the systems of caves along the ridge that were rearranged after the Sixth Isonzo Battle into Italian gun positions for shelling the Austro-Hungarian positions on Mts. Sveta Gora, Vodice and Škabrijel. In 1922, during the Italian rule, the area of Mt. Sabotin was declared a Sacred Zone (*Zona sacra*). Also four big and three small stone pyramids were erected to mark the course of the front line during the Sixth Isonzo Battle. In the former Yugoslav border guardhouse an information point and a museum collection are organized.

#### 11. Solkan: WW1 Military Cemetery

Buried in this cemetery are Austro-Hungarian soldiers who fell at the Gorizia bridgehead during the first six Isonzo Battles until August 1916, when the Italian Army conquered Gorizia. In the original cemetery 5,103 soldiers were reportedly buried. In the 1930's the cemetery was extended because the remains of Austro-Hungarian soldiers from the abandoned Italian military cemeteries were transferred here. There are also a central monument and a tomb of unidentified soldiers in the cemetery. The original form of the cemetery has been preserved. Only the extreme edge of the embankment towards the Isonzo River was altered because it collapsed during the bombing of the railway and Solkan Bridge during the Second World War.

#### 12. Bohinj Railway

In 1906, the railway from Bohinj, or the Bohinj Railway, was opened. It connected Jesenice with the places in Baška grapa Valley, Most na Soči, Gorizia, and further on with the Karst and Trieste (*in Slovenian: Trst*). The railway was a great achievement of building technique at the time. In the time of battles along the Isonzo River, it served as the central supply route for the Austro-Hungarian Army at this section of the front. Nowadays, a travel by a museum train along the whole route with magnificent views of nature is possible.

With its span of 85 metres the railway bridge across the Isonzo River near Solkan is one of the longest stone-arch bridges in the world and one in the series of 65 bridges and viaducts along the Bohinj Railway, built between 1900 and 1906. Fatal for Solkan Bridge were the events on the Isonzo Front: its main arch was blown up in August 1916, during the fights for Gorizia. In 1918 a provisional steel construction was set up which enabled transport across the bridge until 1927 when the Italian State Railways, which managed the bridge at the time, completed the restoration of the arch in cut stone in practically identical form to the original.

#### 13. Gorjansko: WW1 Military Cemetery

Buried in the cemetery are Austro-Hungarian soldiers who died in the nearby hospital. The monumental portion of the cemetery was completed already during the War, in July 1916. According to the data of the Italian authorities that in the 1930s managed the disinterring of their soldiers buried in military cemeteries, 6,015 soldiers are buried here. The military cemetery of Gorjansko is the biggest Austro-Hungarian cemetery of the Great War on the Slovenian territory. Its original appearance has been well preserved, except that the former three-block stone crosses and marble plates with names on the collective graves are no longer found in place.

#### 14. Črniče: WW1 Military Cemetery

The Cemetery contains the graves of 466 Austro-Hungarian soldiers of different ethnicities. The concrete headstones of common soldiers and officers are standardized. In the centre of the graveyard a magnificent monument of 1918 is positioned, to which a cypress-lined path leads. In the pediment of the entrance portal there is the inscription J. R. 96.

#### 15. Štanjel: WW1 Military Cemetery

Running through Štanjel is the Bohinj Railway connecting Jesenice, Gorizia and Trieste. It served for supplying the Austro-Hungarian army and for transportation of wounded soldiers from the front. One of bigger war hospitals in the rear also operated at Štanjel. In the vicinity of Štanjel there is an Austro-Hungarian military cemetery where Austro-Hungarian soldiers and Russian POWs are buried who died in the nearby war hospital in Štanjel Castle or its subsidiary hospital premises in the surroundings. Already during the Isonzo Front the architect Joseph Ulrich prepared an architectural design for the cemetery at the end of which he planned to erect a grandiose scenic temple façade. The works were only completed in 1918. According to the data of the Italian authorities that in the 1930s managed the disinterring of their soldiers from military cemeteries, 1,315 soldiers are buried here.

## **Justification of Outstanding Universal Value**

The Walk of Peace is a particular route of peace and commemoration and a genuine memorial landscape in a unique dialogue with protected natural environment, of which it has become an integral part. It represents an outstanding cultural and social environment and narrate the (hi)stories of the past hundred years, respecting the individual, intimate as well as collective experience. It creates a new transnational identity with respect to every singularity of its components. The international character of the conflict has turned into the transnational nature of the Walk of Peace.

Some sites have already been declared monuments of national importance, all are entered in the National Heritage Registry,. The military cemeteries are protected by the War Grave Sites Act. Several institutions on the state, regional and local levels take care of maintaining the material remains on the sites and make them talk to a visitor. The Kobarid Museum and the “Walks of Peace in the Soča Region Foundation” take care of preserving the historical heritage of the Isonzo Front and presenting it for study-, tourist- and educational purposes.

The Walk of Peace constitutes a historical and remembrance route that connects cultural heritage on the sites of the First World War from the Alps to the Adriatic. The component parts are chosen with a clear vision to express through different aspects connected to the physical heritage a unified, common and unique narrative of war and peace.

**Criterion (ii):** The material heritage of the Walk of Peace is still nowadays the tangible witness of human aspiration to find humanity in the most brutal conditions of the war, when an unprecedented scale of destruction and violence also triggered an enormous scale of human effort to worship and commemorate the dead comrades and to pave the way for a peaceful future. From the strategic point of view the front line, which is a route of peace and mutual respect today, represents a unique military exertion in the mountain warfare and on the harsh karst terrain. The material imprints of the First World War (trenches, shelters, remains of buildings, etc.) are still present everywhere and, thanks to the conservation and preservation processes, have become an integral part of the landscape in the region both in physical and spiritual sense. The wooden Russian Orthodox chapel on the steep slope in the Alps, or the picturesque, yet heart-breaking Memorial Church of the Holy Spirit at Javorca plateau, reflect the survivors’ inner urge to construct timeless memorials to their dead comrades. The two shrines preserved the tradition in style and materials, each of its original space and society.

More than 45 well preserved and regularly maintained military cemeteries in the Isonzo valley are part of the funerary tradition of the First World War. They contain individual tombs, mainly with crosses as headstones, on which soldiers’ names, when known, are inscribed. A new manner of worshipping the dead emerged during the First World War when soldiers expressed their wish to make a closure with the dead companions and with the war itself.

The cultural heritage is represented by charnel houses, memorial plaques, cemeteries and caves which are material witnesses of war technology and architecture as well as of different religious traditions. They have survived the traumatic century of wars, displacements, destructions and political changes, and have been well preserved until today and also respected by the state authorities, civil societies and local population and administration.

The Walk of Peace stretches across three national- and natural zones, thus bridging different cultures, identities, and traditions. The memorial landscape of the Walk of Peace marks the turbulent past that turned into a good practice of effective collaboration, mutual respect and awareness of the shared-, not separate or dividing history of the past hundred years. It represents a serious reflection about the contemporary societies, about the importance of peace promotion being a joint effort of neighbouring states that share the region of the former frontiers and barriers between cultural traditions, identities, which eventually culminated in violent conflicts.

**Criterion (vi):** The Walk of Peace marks an important trace of the world military and political actions that crucially shaped the political, social and cultural history of the region. It nevertheless remains in the shadow of the European and World collective memory and even at the margin of the experience of the First World War. Besides the material traces, the horrible experience left numerous traces in the form of egodocuments. On the surface level, they reflect a personal, intimate and national experience, but on the deeper level, these diaries, letters, memoirs reveal several other aspects; they talk about an international event and transnational experience with many features, such as the reflection about surpassing the cultural, identificatory, national, religious, ethnic and linguistic traditions. Wars have a peculiar nature: they combine destruction and creation; the latter is manifested above all in outstanding artistic echoes in literature and art (Ernest Hemingway, Rudyard Kipling, Oskar Kokoschka, Giuseppe Ungaretti, Stefan Zweig, Ladislav Kofránek, Giovanni Michelucci, Remigius Geyling, Prežihov Voranc, Fran Tratnik, Rihard Jakopič, Maksim Gaspari, Svetoslav Peruzzi, Tone Kralj etc.)

Within the span of a hundred years, remembrance in many different forms has emerged through diaries and memoirs, photographs, experience of civil population, refugees, occupational politics, military strategies, battles, life and death. But in the course of the hundred years, a common awareness of the suffering and loss inflicted on people regardless of their national, ethnic, linguistic or religious background has prevailed in the remembrance and commemorative practices on the territory of the Walk of Peace.

Over the past hundred years the memory and sites have been preserved in order to enable the contemporary generations to understand the meaning of peace, the homeland and mutual respect. The Walk of Peace speaks transnationally, as it does not stand for any particular national (hi)story that could possibly divide and provoke new misunderstandings. Rather, it stands for the shared, also common but never unified or uniform commemoration. The Walk of Peace is a place of national and international commemorations and remembrances. Thus it is of a great importance to maintain the physical memorial landscape in order to preserve a dignified posture of peaceful coexistence.

After a hundred years, the energy is now exclusively directed to the promotion of peace, mutual respect, cooperation and coexistence in the region which is a meeting point and a cross-road of three world civilizations (German, Roman, Slavic) with a variety of identities and traditions. After a hundred years, peace becomes a living condition on the Walk of Peace.

### **Statements of authenticity and/or integrity**

The sites of the Walk of Peace are located on original settings. Their authentic form and materials have been preserved as much as possible. Taking into account the destructive military activities during the First World War and the harsh mountain climate, the sites have been well preserved and have kept all the original features in accordance with the high standards and the international rules on the preservation of cultural heritage up till present. So, they convey the historical and contemporary meaning and thus possess the ability to effectively communicate their physical, functional, visual and historical integrity to the public.

The sites have kept their historical and functional integrity because of their authenticity and uniqueness of the human creative genius in the troubled war times, conveying the values of freedom and mutual respect to every generation to come. They transcend cultural diversity of the original/authentic creators that was rooted in the multicultural tradition of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and reflect the contemporary re-invented transnational tradition of the bordering region. Especially the funerary heritage of the contemporary Walk of Peace has transmitted to the local population a humanistic attitude towards the cultural heritage of the Isonzo Front as the common heritage of those who live there and those who had fought or died there a century ago. The genuine cultural value of the sites along the Walk of Peace – peace, respect of the dead and the living, coexistence - has been preserved and passed on over a span of one century.

All proposed sites are inscribed in the National Heritage Registry. Some sites have already been officially recognised as the monuments of national importance while the military cemeteries are protected by the special War Grave Sites Act. It is important to note that the route and the sites extend along different natural environments. The northern/mountainous part of the Walk of Peace belongs to the Triglav National Park; the Karst belongs to the European network Natura 2000 which protects the natural environment, the habitat types and species.

For the sake of better surveillance and coordinated management, the Kobarid Museum was founded in 1990, and ten years later the “Walks of Peace in the Soča Region Foundation” was established. The mission of both these institutions is to preserve the historical heritage of the First World War in the area of the Isonzo Front and present it for study-, tourist- and educational purposes. The Kobarid Museum collection exhibits about 900 items from its holdings; in 2015, about 65,000 visitors came to see it.

The Foundation coordinates the project “The Walk of Peace from the Alps to the Adriatic” which connects the heritage of the Isonzo Front and has developed into a unique cross-border historical-tourist destination. The Walk of Peace Visitor Centre registered about 25,000 visitors in 2015.

The Walk of Peace constitutes a common historical and remembrance route that connects sites of cultural heritage of the First World War from the Alps to the Adriatic. The proposed sites are chosen with a clear vision to express a unified, common narrative of war and peace through different aspects of each component part. Every site of the Walk of Peace speaks for itself. Their connection to the physical route of heritage makes a whole which conveys the transnational and transborder significance of the Walk of Peace.

### **Comparison with other similar properties**

The historic Isonzo Front and the contemporary Walk of Peace offer a unique experience of the First World War and of an important battle zone that left a heavy burden on the future of the territory and its people. The sites of the Walk of Peace represent the remembrance of human values and the heritage of many nations representatives of which fought on the Isonzo Front during the years 1915–1917/1918; they fought for a lasting peace and respect of differences between nations, states, languages, religions, traditions, etc., which only came true with the realization of the Walk of Peace. It promotes the ideas of peace, coexistence and mutual understanding through the well preserved WW1 remains of the military built and technical heritage, war cemeteries and war chapels that survived the turbulent interwar period as well as the Second World War. It could qualify as a historical site as well as a funerary site, manifesting the specific WW1 approach to burying dead soldiers – to inter them in individual graves with individual headstones inscribed with their names to express respect for their individuality and personal loss in the face of massive and industrialized death; and the other aspect: the enormous number of names and also inscriptions saying "Unbekannt" or "Ignoto" underline the great national loss of each nation that had fought along the banks of the river Isonzo. The sites also include original pieces of art and architecture which bear witness to enormous human endeavours.

The first level of comparison considers the historical background and the time frame of the war sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List and the UNESCO Tentative List. These sites are very diverse in their meaning, structure and communicativeness and they belong to different periods in World History. As has already been described in the *Sites funéraires et mémoriels de la Première Guerre mondiale (Front Ouest)* on the UNESCO Tentative List, these sites could be listed as follows: Masada (Israel), the Great Wall of China, the historic centre of Bridgetown and its garrison in Barbados, the Fort Jesus in Mombasa, Kenya, or the Fortifications of Vauban in France, as well as Waterloo in Belgium. However, many of them represent a building, a defensive structure, even the reorganization of a territory for the needs of war and defence. The

site of Waterloo, entered on the tentative list of Belgium, is presented as the last battlefield of the pre-20 Century wars, followed by new European governance and marking the beginning of a long period of peace, especially in the Western Europe.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century was marked by two World Wars, both heavily marked as industrial and total wars that besides military losses laid a very heavy burden on the civil population as well. The Second World War exceeded the First World War, although the latter had paved the way also for the regretful civil experience and losses. The sites of the 20<sup>th</sup> century conflicts are mostly related to the Second World War and to the inhuman civil experience, namely the German Nazi concentration and extermination camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial in Japan. The Slovenian site on the UNESCO Tentative List – the Franja Partisan Hospital – represents an exceptional humanitarian effort in the war circumstances. Among the sites that are related to special humanity values, the *Sites funéraires et mémoriels de la Première Guerre mondiale (Front Ouest)* also mention: the Slave Route, the island of Gorée in Senegal or the Liberation Heritage Route in South Africa. In 2010 the site of nuclear tests of the Bikini Atoll was entered on the UNESCO List of World Heritage. Recently, France has succeeded in including the Les Plages du Débarquement regroupent l'ensemble des plages sur lesquelles eurent lieu les opérations de débarquement du 6 juin 1944 on the UNESCO Tentative List. Mamayev Kurgan Memorial complex "To the heroes of the Battle of Stalingrad" in Volgograd is a symbol of heroism and patriotism of the Soviet nation and a tribute to the memory of those who died in the great battle of the Volga river, the most significant land battle in the human history which became a turning point in World War II.

But there have been only a few sites or nominations linked to the First World War, with the *Ligne de défense d'Amsterdam* on the UNESCO List of World Heritage which could also refer to the period of the First World War. Apart from this, the Rumanian monument of Târgu Jiu by the sculptor Constantin Brâncuși has been included in the UNESCO Tentative List for the time being; it pays tribute to the Rumanian soldiers fallen between 1916 and 1918 and is valued for its artistic value and is a monument of national importance. The second First World War entry relates to the funerary memorial site of the *Sites funéraires et mémoriels de la Première Guerre mondiale (Front Ouest)*, which reflects on the one hand the international character of the nomination, associated to the extensive human losses, and on the other hand a new approach to burying dead soldiers and paying tribute to their memory. The funerary site belongs to a completely new memorization tradition in honouring and commemorating the dead soldiers and reflects a new, a more personal way of burying the individual and thus to valuing the individual loss in a massive death. The third First World War entry also relates to the funerary memorial site and also to the direct memory of a battle zone in the First World War - *Çanakkale (Dardanelles) and Gelibolu (Gallipoli) Battles Zones in the First World War*. This site reflects a memory of a great military campaign and enormous human losses, it is presented as a landmark of the world military and political history.

The funerary heritage has already been cited in the Franco–Belgian nomination of the First World War funerary site as follows: the funeral site of the Bronze Age Sammallahdenmäki in Finland, the Egyptian pyramids, the Thracian Tomb of Sveshtari in Bulgaria, the tumulus and rune-stones and the church of Jelling in Denmark, the Tomb of Askia in Mali, the Archaeological Park of San Agustín in Colombia with its monuments and its statuary pre-Columbian funeral, without forgetting the mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor in China and the Taj Mahal in India. These entries reflect mostly architectural qualities or they represent some unique burial characteristics.

The Isonzo Front represents one of the most ferocious battlefields of the First World War, due to the natural landscape that extended from the high Julian Alps across the Karst plateau to the Adriatic Sea. The war did not bypass the high mountains which represented the highest fighting positions of the First World War, where temperatures were extremely low, living and working conditions were impossible as the soldiers had to prepare the infrastructure for the fighting, they

were exposed to constant and omnipresent avalanche threat and the so-called white death. On the high Alpine sectors of the front, there was hardly any no-man's-land. The southern part of the front traversed the grey harsh limestone ground of the Karst that turned dazzling white during the summer and could not offer a safe shelter to the soldiers; the living conditions were marked by dry and extremely hot summers and strenuous lack of water.

The Walk of Peace bears witness to the unique historical and functional integrity of the human creative genius in the troubled wartime, conveying the values of freedom and mutual respect to every generation to come and reflects the contemporary re-invented transnational tradition of the bordering region.