



WALK OF PEACE - CAPITALIZATION OF THE WORLD WAR I HERITAGE THROUGH TOURISM

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Abstract *The First World War left many wounds that affected generations of people, nations, and landscapes. The patrimony left behind by World War I is diverse and scattered throughout the world represented by: trenches, mausoleums, cemeteries and monuments, war graves, some of them true architectural and artistic masterpieces. However, many of these monuments have fallen into oblivion or are scarcely capitalized on cultural, historical or tourism routes. In our research we have brought arguments on the importance of capitalizing on World War I heritage through cultural routes and tourism and we have identified the steps to be taken to develop such a route in Romania.*

Key words:
World War I Heritage,
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1. INTRODUCTION – WORLD WAR I HERITAGE

The First World War (1914–1918) was the first armed conflict on a global level. At the height of hostilities about two thirds of the countries of the world were involved in the war. It was triggered by the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, heir to the throne, and his wife Sophie on the 28th of June 1914. The belligerents were divided into two camps: the Central Powers (Austria-Hungary, Germany, the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria), and the Entente Powers (Great Britain, France, the Russian Empire, Serbia, Romania). Three battlefields were opened in

Europe: the Eastern, the Western and the Balkan Fronts.

Symbolically, the armistice began on the 11th of November 1918 at 11 a.m. It has been one of the bloodiest conflicts in history and has caused major political changes, including the 1917-1923 revolutions in many of the nations involved. Unresolved rivalries at the end of the conflict contributed to the beginning of the Second World War 21 years later. It is estimated that 70 million soldiers were mobilized during the war; more than 8 million of them were killed in the battles, 8 million were missing and more that 21 million were wounded.

The First World War left many wounds that affected generations of people, nations, and landscapes. The patrimony left behind by World War I is diverse and scattered throughout the world. In Romania, the National Office for Heroes' Cult, has developed a comprehensive database of monuments related to the commemoration of the two world wars, including: mausoleums, cemeteries and monuments, war graves, the tomb of the unknown soldier, some of them true architectural and artistic masterpieces¹. However, many of these monuments have fallen into oblivion or are scarcely capitalized on cultural, historical or tourism routes.

2. CULTURAL ROUTES AND THEIR IMPACT ON TOURISM

The concept of cultural routes was already initiated in 1987 by the Council of Europe. This was intended to implement the Council of Europe's key cultural principles: Human rights, cultural democracy, cultural diversity and identity, dialogue and the exchange of mutual enrichment across all borders as well.

According to ICOMOS a Cultural Route is any route of communication, be it land, water, or some other type, which is physically delimited and is also characterized by having its own specific dynamic and historic functionality to serve a specific and well-determined purpose, which must fulfill the following conditions:

a) It must arise from and reflect interactive movements of people as well as multidimensional,

continuous, and reciprocal exchanges of goods, ideas, knowledge and values between peoples, countries, regions or continents over significant periods of time;

b) It must have thereby promoted a cross-fertilization of the affected cultures in space and time, as reflected both in their tangible and intangible heritage;

c) It must have integrated into a dynamic system the historic relations and cultural properties associated with its existence.

A cultural route is a physical, tangible section in space defined by an inventory of tangible and intangible cultural and historical elements connected by a theme, concept or definition as well as by the identification of sites of existing cultural heritage linked in a dispersed, linear or regional structure creating a marked and interpreted continuous whole within the unified context of the route (ICOMOS, 2005).

The cultural route constitutes a cultural asset enriched by the different cultures it has fertilized and which transcends them in overall value by offering a substantial number of shared characteristics and value systems (Häfele, p.2).

On a journey through time and space these roads can show how different cultures contribute to the common European cultural heritage. They demonstrate the diversity of living cultures and combine local heritage with European ideas. Many cultural roads access to less familiar themes and aspects of European history and European cultures.

¹ National Office for Heroes' Cult database
<https://once.mapn.ro/app/webroot/HartaInteractiva/harta.html>

They encourage the discovery of new destinations or hidden aspects of the common heritage. The European Cultural Routes can build on historic trails or cultural concepts of transnational relevance.

Cultural Routes are based on a cultural and tourism cooperation, which aims at the development and application of a route or multiple routes. With regard to sustainable and intelligent cultural tourism products, Cultural Routes also take a pioneering role.

The relationship between Heritage Places and Tourism is dynamic and may involve conflicting values. It should be managed in a sustainable way for present and future generations (ICOMOS, Mexico 1999).

The interaction between heritage resources or values and tourism is dynamic and ever changing, generating opportunities and challenges, as well as potential conflicts. Tourism projects, activities and developments should achieve positive outcomes and minimize adverse impacts on the heritage and lifestyles of the host community, while responding to the needs and aspirations of the visitor.

Conservation, interpretation and tourism development programmes should be based on a comprehensive understanding of the specific, but often complex or conflicting aspects of heritage significance of the particular place. Tourism development and infrastructure projects should take account of the aesthetic, social and cultural dimensions, natural and cultural landscapes. Before heritage places are promoted or developed for increased tourism, management plans should

assess the natural and cultural values of the resource. They should then establish appropriate limits of acceptable change, the impact of visitor numbers on the physical characteristics, integrity, ecology and biodiversity of the place and so on.

The importance of European Cultural Routes:

- the concept of Cultural Route assumes that the value of the whole is greater than the sum of its parts and gives the Route its meaning;
- high tourist potential largely unexploited, promoting less known European destinations;
- value the touristic and cultural potential that is less well known or cannot be classified into other classes of importance;
- the trans-nationality and representativeness of the common European heritage;
- a sustainable, ethical and social way built on skills and heritage values;
- mitigating the negative effects of classical tourism practice (attenuation of seasonality, reducing tourist flows of overcrowded destinations, complex capitalization of the heritage - development of a complex tourism product).

The official recognition of a route is made by the Council of Europe through the European Cultural Routes Institute.

3. NETWORLD PROJECT AND WALK OF PEACE BRAND

The NETWORLD project - **Networking in preserving the First World War multicultural heritage in the Danube countries**, has been developed and implemented within the Transnational Programme Interreg Danube. Fourteen project partners lead by a Slovenian partner, from nine Danube Transnational Programme countries joint their efforts in the NETWORLD proposal to manage the sustainable use of the First World War cultural heritage by combining it with a quality cultural tourism².

NETWORLD contributes to the Danube Transnational Programme objectives by strengthening the joint and integrated approaches in preserving and managing the First World War cultural heritage and resources in the Danube region as a basis for sustainable development and growth, in order to increase mobility, sustainability, common remembering and cultural tourism. The main objectives of the NETWORLD project are to increase the awareness of the First World War heritage and its sustainable use for the development of quality cultural tourism.

One specific objective of the NETWORLD project is related to the "Walk of Peace" brand. The Walk of Peace from the Alps to the Adriatic is the main tourist product of The Walk of Peace Foundation Slovenia, which is responsible for maintaining the heritage of the First World War and

its presentation to the world with desire to expand peace as an outstanding universal value, cooperate and develop cultural tourism.

The Walk of Peace route from the Alps to the Adriatic was created as a memory on 1st World War and to all, who suffered in this area and as a reminder why it is important to avoid wars. The path which connects the heritage of the First World War from the Alps to the Adriatic Sea, is entered on the UNESCO's trial list of world heritage. The path connected people, areas and rich and natural heritage along the line of former Soča/Isonzo front. The Walk of Peace, which is altogether 230 km long, crosses both the Slovenian and the Italian territory.³

Within the Networld project, partners have promoted the message of this route of peace and have made the first steps to extend this route to their own countries. Each partner identified heritage objectives related to World War I that can be redeemed by tourism. These have been included in a common database. Heritage management plans have been developed to preserve and promote some of these monuments and a transnational strategy that indicates the main actions to be taken. Diversified quality tourist promotion brochures and mobile applications were developed to promote the common brand in the Danube region. In order to increase the education and awareness of young people on topics such as World War I and World Peace, have been created within the project specific non-formal educational tools using the gamification

² <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/networld>

³ www.travel-slovenia.si

technique put into practice through a Lego game or an Escape room with WWI theme.

4. ACTIONS FOR CAPITALIZING WWI HERITAGE IN TOURISM

One hundred years after the war, there is a renewed interest in war landscapes: battlefields, trenches, frontlines, military infrastructure and artifacts are being re-explored and redefined in the process of constructing heritage landscapes. The question is where and how these landscapes of memories are imbedded in the social and economic dynamics of the 21st century. (Jansen -Verbeke, M. and George, W., 2015 p.4)

Interdisciplinary studies in the field of war and tourism introduce new concepts and research methods to analyze the interaction between cultural, social, economic and political processes and to assess the roles of national and regional governments, and moreover the motivations of stakeholders and residents in the “re-creation of war memories” (Butler & Suntikil, 2013). Practically a good example of Heritage reinterpretation, according to current trends in tourism demand, is the Walk of Peace.

Understanding and managing the dynamics of tourism in preserving war heritage has indeed become a challenging research mission. Tourism is a driving force, yet the touristic approach ought to be very cautious and not a primary aim of reflection and actions.

Assessing the pro-active role of tourism and destination managers, promoters and visitors in preserving WWI heritage and memories of the past

is a first step in search of a sustainable development model. (Jansen - Verbeke, M. and George, W., 2015 p.22).

In our approach of the Networld project, we have chosen for Romania 26 heritage places (monuments, war cemetery, mausoleums and sculptures) related to the First World War for which we developed a "Strategy for the preservation of the cultural heritage of the First World War in Romania". The vision is to create a communicative, creative and coordinated network of WWI cultural heritage stakeholders highly involved in protection and rehabilitation, marketing and promotion of cultural heritage patrimony and that presents a unified voice for Romanian WWI cultural heritage and sites.

The action plan provides a foundation for increase protection and rehabilitation of WWI cultural heritage, capacity building, education and coordination of stakeholder actions, and the development and promotion of cultural heritage and cultural tourism.

The action plan was developed on five main pillars, respectively: effective and sustainable heritage protection and rehabilitation; capacity building; interpretation of cultural heritage; education of various stakeholders; coordination of different stakeholders.

According to the report on performed interviews implemented by INCDT, it is a clear need for activities of restoration, preservation and conservation of the WWI heritage and in this regard more resources should be allocated for this purpose.

For each action, several steps have been set, as follows:

Effective and sustainable heritage protection and rehabilitation involves the following steps: inventory of WWI cultural heritage objects requiring restoration and / or preservation; inventory of WWI cultural heritage objects requiring restoration and / or preservation; increase the involvement of cultural institutions (i.e. museum, private owners) in activities such as restoration, protection, rehabilitation; develop site management plans as a vital tool for strategic co-ordination and monitoring; public-private management a form of management, involving civil society, can be a solution for degraded and forgotten monuments.

Capacity building will provide an improvement of skills and knowledge of the stakeholders. Stakeholders will consolidate their capacities in order to fulfill their role in the valorization of WWI cultural heritage. Thus, a number of activities might be carried out in this direction: create a database of stakeholders involved in heritage activities related to protection, preservation, rehabilitation of WWI; establishment of a national network with representatives from the museums, the public forum monuments which will generate virtual regional attractions poles (RAP) for local visitors and tourists.

Interpretation and presentation are key components for cultural heritage capitalization and conservation efforts, aiming to enhance general public appreciation, experience, respect and understanding of cultural heritage sites and presentation are key components for cultural

heritage capitalization and conservation efforts, aiming to enhance general public appreciation, experience, respect and understanding of cultural heritage sites (e.g: the production of a digital models of battery's command post, the production of two-dimensional site plans, the creation of short videos, the creation a movie festival of historic films approaching the WWI events).

Education of various stakeholders is necessary in order to increase public participation and involvement. The education with respect to cultural heritage should be included at all levels, and particularly to young generation, not just a core subject but through interdisciplinary actions. Thus, several actions will be necessary to be taken: create partnership between County Directorates for Culture and educational institutions; create an educational forum for stakeholders, elected officials, tourism leaders and front-line tourism personnel; internships/ twinnings within the partner organizations.

Coordination of different stakeholders - a better collaboration with local administration where the WWI heritage is located was also mentioned as a necessary condition to increase capitalization of cultural heritage. Several action plans were proposed in this direction, as follows: strengthening the partnership between cultural institutions, the tourism sector operators and the civil society to include historical monuments in WWI in tourist trails and to create awareness; raise awareness by the County Directorates for Culture about the historical patrimony from the WWI, among local authorities and residents; create a network of

“WWI Cultural Heritage Tourism Ambassadors” also with other key cultural attractions.

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