

**Cross-border landscape as heritage:  
Insights from Slovenia – walk, parks and UNESCO  
MARJETA PISK, ŠPELA LEDINEK LOZEJ<sup>82</sup>**

The heritagization of landscape, as multi-folded process, might be initiated by various triggers and with different aims. It involves diverse actors and stakeholders and has several outcomes. The processes and outcomes are anchored in politics of power, but are also results of contingency of events, actors and opportunities. Following the political changes in the late 1980s and the intensification of European integration and territorial cooperation policies, borders and border areas became a contested site of representation and policy-making. The landscape, its management, protection and enhancement are in an orbit of governmental responsibility and are a means through which governmental ambitions can be instrumentalised. Borders influence understandings of heritage and are undeniably crucial to the production of heritage in these regions. At the same time, heritage itself can be (mis)used to construct and reinforce borders. Although cross-border heritage initiatives and cross-border heritage sites arguably “participate in the symbolic and networked de-bordering of the EU” (Niklasson 2019: 119), states constantly struggle to control heritage at the border.

---

<sup>82</sup> Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (Slovenia).

This paper presents four different case studies of cross-border initiatives that are part of a constituent landscape and heritage discourse and simultaneously involve multiple heritage-making practises in a cross-border area. They range from the cross-border park to the UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserve to the World Heritage List. Drawing on various sources, from planning documents, institutional and media reports to ethnography of border areas through (participant) observation, informal conversations and interviews with different actors, we try to answer how such heritage is produced, appropriated and eventually internalised.

The Trilateral Park Goričko-Raab-Őrség is the cross-border initiative of the nature parks along the Slovenian-Austrian-Hungarian border, established in 2006. The initiative arose in the context of heritagization processes of the former Iron Courtin and environmental protection of the landscape along it. Due to the unresolved issue of stable funding, the initiative faces several problems. The Walk of Peace is a cross-border route linking the main remains and memorials of the Isonzo/Soča Front in Slovenia and Italy. Its founder, the eponymous Foundation, established in 2000, has implemented several ambitious transnational, cross-border and smaller local projects, including coordinating the nomination of the Walk of Peace from the Alps to the Adriatic Sea to the UNESCO Tentative List of World Heritage. On the other hand, the efforts of several municipalities along the Slovenian-Italian Brda /Collio area, officially launched in 2015, to nominate the terraced cultural landscape of the area on the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List as a transboundary cultural property have not yet been successful. The ongoing process seeks to highlight the uniqueness of the Brda/Collio terraces as combined works of man and nature, but is heavily dependent on national policy makers in the process of inscription on UNESCO.

We also follow the aspirations of the two parks, the Slovenian Triglav National Park, that included its Julian Alps area to the UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserve network in 2003, and the Italian Regional Park of the Julian Prealps, which joined the same network in 2019, for a transboundary ecoregion. Their endeavours seem promising at the (supra)national and institutional level, but are not perceived and appreciated by the inhabitants of the two parks.

The comparison of the four initiatives identifies scale of cross-border initiatives (global, European, national, regional to local), the ideators, actors and stakeholders involved and their motivations, the success of the measures implemented and their longevity and robustness, hence imprints in the landscape and heritage discourse between tourism industry and identity politics. The paper contributes to the discussion on the relationship between landscape and heritage by adopting a cross-border perspective.

