Academy 2019 – Cultural Heritage ePromotion in the Krka & Kolpa/Kupa River Basin

<http://eregion.eu/22-5-2019-academy-2019-cultural-heritage-epromotion-krka-kolpa-river-basin>

**Welcome Address**

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The region of Dolenjska, Bela Krajina and Posavje has always been an important juncture and crossroads of various routes heading east, west, north and south. For millennia this region was inhabited by people who came into contact with different nations and cultures. This is evidenced by rich archaeological finds from different periods in history. We gained additional insights after the completion of the archaeological excavations at Kapiteljska njiva on Marof Hill in Novo mesto and after the finds in Main Square, which was officially opened on May 10th this year.

On that occasion it was demonstrated that our Main Square is the heart of our town, as so many local people and visitors from all over the Dolenjska Region, Bela krajina and the Posavje Region attended the festivities. The Square intertwines past and present; it is the centre of the town; the space of meeting and socializing; and the venue of a number of cultural, social and sporting events. Close to the Square are the buildings where the oldest grammar school in Slovenia with a continuous tradition was established, and the proud and beautiful facade of the Franciscan monastery of St Lenart. This year we celebrate the 550th anniversary of the arrival of the Franciscan friars in Novo mesto. The Franciscans played an important role in education in the past, since Novo mesto Grammar School was initially run under their auspices, and throughout history they showed compassion and took care of the poor, the abandoned, and the forgotten. For these reasons we will celebrate the 550th anniversary of their arrival in Novo mesto, remembering their importance and the role they played in the development of Novo mesto's history in terms of religion, education and humanitarianism. The City Municipality of Novo mesto is aware of and also financially supports and encourages the projects and programmes that preserve our material and intangible heritage, since it is crucial that, as a community, we are aware that our roots are the foundation of our prosperity and every social development.

Considering the rich and exceptional cultural flow along the meanders of the Krka River, when people in the past still exchanged information by taking long journeys on foot, on horseback, or by carriage, we decided that this year's theme should cover the digitization and e-promotion of our heritage. During the 20th century we made a quantum leap in technology, both in the use of energy and transport, not to mention electronics. In the 21st century, globalization is spreading as signals and information are expanding with supersonic speed. This is why, within our Committee for Cultural Heritage, we saw the need to share all this treasure of the cultural tradition we keep at the intersections of the Kolpa and Krka Rivers with the world by the best and the fastest means.

The idea of the Growing Book by Dr Gabrijelčič, which is an ‘ode’ to the treasure trove of knowledge carried in books and through various institutions, draws attention to the importance of the historical, cultural, humanistic and scientific traditions. It is modern technology with web-based networks that enables us to fully implement this idea; to spread knowledge in the globally-present English language, and to share with other nations.

We are well aware that merely being proud of the rich heritage and cultural tradition of our area is not enough; if we want to become a recognizable tourist destination, it is necessary that potential visitors and tourists learn of our traditions. World tourism trends are directed towards the promotion of cultural heritage and the stories related to a destination. We have this treasure, as well as the tools and technology to position ourselves on the map of electronic networks.

Dear esteemed guests and lecturers at today's Academy, I wish you a pleasant stay in Novo mesto, plenty of new knowledge and, of course, to feel comfortable and welcome in our town.