



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

UNDERWATER CULTURAL HERITAGE 9 STAB

UCH/18/9.STAB/5 REV
19 April 2018
Original: English

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION OF THE UNDERWATER CULTURAL HERITAGE

NINTH MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY BODY

24 April 2018
Paris, UNESCO Headquarters, Room IV, Fontenoy Building
10 am – 6 pm

Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda:

Best Practice

The sixth session of the Meeting of States Parties has adopted Best Practice Examples in Access to Underwater Cultural Heritage, following a recommendation of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Body (STAB). The following document considers a newly proposed example.

Action required: Proposed Resolution in Paragraph 6.

1. The Scientific and Technical Advisory Body (STAB) recommended at its fifth meeting in June 2014 by Recommendation 2/ STAB 5 to the Meeting of States Parties to consider as “Best Practice” all initiatives, undertaken in an exemplary manner and in conformity with the 2001 Convention, which provide the public at large with access to underwater cultural heritage. It also recommended to the Meeting of States Parties to invite States Parties to the Convention to provide examples demonstrating such best practices, and to request the STAB to review the examples.
2. The Meeting of States Parties designated at its sixth session in 2017 the first examples of such Best Practices, now published on the website of the 2001 Convention.
3. The STAB, by its Recommendation 4 /Stab 8, recommended to adopt some procedural rules for the designation of Best Practices, such as:
 - a. To only present practices of access that have proven their efficiency and relevance,
 - b. To designate practices as “Best Practice” only for a period of 4 years,
 - c. To renew the designation only upon the presentation and examination of an updated file,
 - d. To provide the designated Best Practice examples with a Label, in order to encourage the initiative and to give it visibility, by using the Logo of the 2001 Convention.
4. A new example of Best Practices has been proposed by Slovenia and is presented in this document in Annex.
5. A suggestion for a Label has also been used by the new Underwater Cultural Heritage Museum in Campeche, Mexico (see Annex 2). The STAB may wish to discuss the recommendation to be made for the new suggested example and discuss the general use of the Label.
6. The STAB may therefore wish to adopt the following resolution:

DRAFT RESOLUTION 5 / STAB 9

The Scientific and Technical Advisory Body (STAB) to the Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage,

1. Recommends to the Meeting of States Parties to designate the example of “_____” as Best Practice;
2. Recommends to make the designated examples visible by



CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION OF THE UNDERWATER CULTURAL HERITAGE

BEST PRACTICES RELATED TO UNDERWATER CULTURAL HERITAGE

Short Title of the Best Practice: The Ljubljana River Phenomenon: Rescue research, conservation and presentation of the 2nd century BC logboat from the Ljubljana riverbed and establishment of the Center for promotion of natural and cultural heritage of Ljubljana at Vrhnika (Slovenia)

Presented by (State Party): Slovenia

Location: The Ljubljana riverbed at Vrhnika (central Slovenia)

Brief Description of the Underwater Cultural Heritage Site concerned:

The 23-km-long stretch of the Ljubljana riverbed and the surrounding floodplain of the Ljubljana Marshes between Vrhnika and Ljubljana represent one of the most complex archaeological phenomena in the territory of present-day Slovenia, comprising of individual and collective underwater finds, lying exposed on the river bottom or embedded in sand dunes within the channel or forming a part of bank deposits, as well as of the remains of wooden crafts, port infrastructure, water-way regulation interventions, buildings and control points along the river. The early recognition of the archaeological potential of the riverbed at Vrhnika (ancient *Nauportus*) led to one of the world's first research-oriented underwater investigations, conducted by the Carniolan Provincial museum in Ljubljana with the support of Austro-Hungarian Navy divers in 1884, followed by systematic surveying, excavations and integrated research from the 1980s onwards.

The wealth and diversity of underwater finds, ranging from traces of the Mesolithic or even late Paleolithic hunter-gatherer (stone and bone/antler industry), eroded remains of Copper Age pile-dwellings across numerous Bronze Age metalwork and pottery depositions of sacrificial and funeral character, Late Iron Age Celtic-style weaponry, imported Italic bronze ware and silver coinage, an abundance of Roman military equipment, to the evidence of the intensive use of the river area in the Medieval and early Modern period, all testify to the special importance of the river for the local communities and bear universal value for understanding the multi-faceted interaction between humans and their natural environment.

The objects of the small material culture, made of metal, ceramic and organic materials, characterized by excellent preservation, unparalleled within the ensembles from dry-land sites, are presumed to have entered water either directly as a result of accidental losses or intentional acts, or were eroded by the stream from primary contexts in the banks. The functional structure, spatial distribution and chronological dynamics of the finds reflect characteristics of a broader European phenomenon, pointing to a structured deposition of at least some part of the discovered objects from the Metal Ages, the Roman period and perhaps also the Early and High Medieval period, especially from the perspective of the objectively low-risk nature of the river, marked by an extremely small course gradient, a box-shaped channel with depths from 3 to 12 m (mostly 4-7 m) and its width, rarely surpassing 20 m.

The underwater finds are supplemented by over 60 finds of simple dugout canoes, paddles/oars, assembled boats and capable cargo ships from the riverbed and marshy sediments/peat of the surrounding plain, which not only represent clear evidence of the role of water transportation in local economy and exploiting natural resources, but also the proof of the area's vitality in acceptance/transfer/innovation of naval technology in late prehistory and the Early Roman period, continuing in rich shipbuilding traditions of post Medieval and historical periods.

Brief Description of the Best Practice in responding to the criteria set by the Meeting of State Parties (see above):

Although not protected as a whole until 2002, the above-mentioned elements of the Ljubljana River archaeological complex have been formally protected as archaeological heritage and State property by the provisions of national laws since 1945. Nevertheless, the relatively easy access to the valuable finds, together with the suspension of organized archaeological fieldwork in the mid-80s, caused large-scale looting of underwater sites and illicit trade in antiquities reaching the international market in the late 80s and 90s, which was subsequently reduced by the declaration of the Ljubljana as a cultural monument of national importance in 2002, imposing controlled, permit-based diving in the protected area and stricter police surveillance, but also the intensification of awareness-raising initiatives and projects for the local population.

The important development of the management of the river's cultural heritage was brought by the ratification of the *La Valleta* (1992) convention in 1999, resulting in the increase of preventive archaeological research also in the inland rivers of Ljubljana, but perhaps even more with the new Cultural Heritage Protection Act in 2008. The latter, among other things, provided the so-called abolition scheme, which enabled the private keepers of archeological objects to report the finds in their possession and hand them over in return for financial compensation; that provision ensured the acquisition of three large collections of underwater finds from Ljubljana for public museums, resulting in a large exhibition of the National museum of Slovenia in 2009 entitled *The Ljubljana - a River and its Past*) and a permanent display of the most attractive and telling finds from one of the collections gained in the newly-established Ljubljana River Experience and Exhibition Centre at Vrhnika.

Following the provisions of national legislation and promoting the concepts of the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001), a large project on sustainable management, safeguarding and promotion of the archaeological heritage of the Ljubljana River was envisaged and executed in the 2014-2016 period in the partnership of the Museum and Galleries of Ljubljana, the Municipality of Vrhnika and the Biotechnical Faculty of University of Ljubljana, co-financed by the EAA financial mechanism 2009-2014.

The Ljubljana River Experience and Exhibition Site project was aimed to protect the most endangered parts of the monument and to increase the accessibility of the heritage. The core of the presented efforts is comprised by (1) the *in-situ* protection and monitoring of a Roman barge in the riverbed near Sinja Gorica, discovered in 2008 during a preventive underwater survey in the course of the flood-management works, and partially researched in 2012 by the Institute for the protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia, (2) the rescue excavation and lift of an approximately 14.3-m-long, up to 1.35-m-wide and 0.65-m-deep oak logboat from the riverbed at Vrhnika by the Institute for Underwater Archaeology in Ljubljana and in collaboration with the International Centre for Underwater Archaeology in Zadar - ICUA (the logboat being currently in conservation at the Restoration center of

the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia in Ljubljana), (3) establishment and opening of the above-mentioned Centre at Vrhnika with a permanent exhibition on the archaeology of the Ljubljanica River and the planned pressurized chamber for the future display of the logboat.

How is the site protected legally?

Act Ratifying the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Revised)
(Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 24/1999);

Act Ratifying the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage
(Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia - International Treaties, no. 1/2008);

Cultural Heritage Protection Act

(Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 16/08, with amendments)

General provisions on the definition and ownership of archaeological remains, code of conduct in the case of accidental discovery, provisions on issuing permits for archeological research, keeping site archives...);

Rules on Archaeological Research

(Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 3/2013)

Code of conduct and standards of archaeological investigations with reference to the Annex to the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, including project design, necessary qualifications, conservation and site management, reporting and dissemination);

Order declaring the riverbeds of Ljubljanica and its tributary Ljubija, including their banks, and the area of the old Ljubljanica riverbed a national cultural heritage monument

(Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, nos. 115/2003 and 103/2005)

Area, scope and measures of protection including restrictions of the physical interventions in the riverbed and diving with scuba equipment only with the authorization by the Ministry of Culture and Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia.

What practical measures have been implemented to ensure the protection of the site?

Roman barge in the Ljubljanica riverbed near Sinja Gorica

(1) Impact assessment of the flood-management measures (2011-2012);

(2) Partial excavation and 3D recording (2012);

(3) Execution of a protective covering of the exposed part of the barge with sandbags and sediment infill (2012);

(4) Monitoring/analysis of biological and chemical markers of wood degradation and erosion/sedimentation and assessment of processes at the site in regular intervals (2013-2017);

Logboat from the Ljubljanica riverbed at Vrhnika

(1) Impact assessment of the flood-management measures (2014);

(2) Complete excavation, photo 3D documentation and virtual reconstruction, lift and transport to the Restoration centre in Ljubljana (2015);

(3) Conservation with the melamine treatment method (2015-2018);

(4) Exhibition of the logboat at the Ljubljanica Experience centre at Vrhnika (planned 2018);

General protection of the sites is provided by the signs and information boards, notifying on the existence of the archaeological monument and safeguarding measures (prohibition of diving with scuba gear without the permit), constant attention of the local community, especially fishermen and hunters, as well as police surveillance of the areas exposed to looting.

How is responsible and non-intrusive public access to the underwater cultural heritage encouraged? What special and outstanding effort has been made to make the site accessible to the public?

The area of the Ljubljana Basin has great potential in terms of cultural and natural heritage. Encouraging the local community's awareness and promoting quality leisure time are of crucial importance for the area's identity. At the same time, these activities contribute to new opportunities for local tourism and the revitalisation of old crafts and local traditions. It also enables a more efficient protection and preservation of the heritage's own value and potential for future generations. Protection of heritage without revitalisation, focused on modern and current trends of everyday life, is meaningless and may lead to further deterioration. Therefore, taking into consideration the accessibility of heritage through a variety of communication methods is crucial for the site protection. Special emphasis is placed on the synergy between natural and cultural heritage as an additional potential for widening the access.

The Ljubljana River Experience and Exhibition Site Project represents the first phase of a broader and integrated project of revitalization of cultural and natural heritage of the Ljubljana Basin. Its objective was to protect, preserve, and present the heritage, but also to provide maximum accessibility and thereby long-term effects on a sustainable social development in the local, national and global context - including quality service for the local residents as well as domestic and international visitors.

The project's results:

- Protected, restored and managed unique quality cultural monument of national importance.
- A distinctive comprehensive identity of the monument, which provides guidance on sustainable development and enables producing long-term strategies in the field of protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage as well as their presentation and popularisation for the broadest domestic and international audiences.
- Improved access to cultural and natural heritage, potential for educational activities, leisure and tourism businesses, developing creative industries, preserving old crafts and intangible heritage as well as improving the quality of life in the city and the wider region with new employments as a result.
- Connection established between two of the most visited tourist destinations in Slovenia (Postojna - Ljubljana), networking between locations within the Ljubljana Basin with a high quality, interactive and experiential exhibition at Vrhnika.
- Revitalisation of a previously deteriorated urban area, abandoned and lagging behind due to unfavourable economic trends.

How is public awareness, appreciation and protection of the heritage increased?

Through the Ljubljana River Experience and Exhibition Site project, its most vulnerable parts were not only protected, but also expertly preserved and made available to a large audience. The Ljubljana River permanent exhibition is placed right in the centre of Vrhnika, since the monument's actual location is less suitable - near the river, within an environmentally protected area, which poses infrastructural issues. The complex content on the development of the Vrhnika area from the

perspective of the Ljubljana River is presented in a multi-level and multi-layered manner, adjusted to various target groups. Particular emphasis is placed on the dynamics of the visit (image, sound, clocking, interaction, light and water effects) and modern museum standards. The visitor's experience is multi-layered and, in an abstract way, framed by three worlds, defined by the river as the carrier vehicle of the exhibition: the world below (underwater world, Karst underworld, underwater archaeology, space dedicated to the unknown); the world on the surface (the level in-between, transition from one world to another, the plane/flow of the river - flow of time); the world above (world on the river, world of the people, world of the known).

The interactive experience and exhibition site located in downtown Vrhnika has been designed to encourage the public, including vulnerable groups, to actively participate in strengthening the common responsibility for heritage and for the development of tourism, creative industries, revival of old crafts and local traditions. All results of the project are aimed at the general public. Raising awareness of the local community was one of the fundamental tasks of the project. The content and programmes that concern the wider Ljubljana area also create the potential for tourism development and the expansion of target audiences. By bringing together experts, integrating the local public and by networking all those quality programmes, the exchange of knowledge and skills, values and attitudes as well as long-term integration of local, national and international arena is established. By following various methods of communication (experimental workshops, programmes, events) each age and interest group are addressed. By using customized programmes and encouraging active involvement, special attention is paid to vulnerable groups and visitors with special needs.

How does the example support scientific research and appropriate conservation in accordance with the Rules of the Annex to the 2001 Convention?

The decisions related to the protection and preservation of the logboat situated in the area of a cultural monument of national importance have been marked by: (a) the progressive erosion of the right bank directly above the site; (b) the uncertainty with regard to its stability and the related issue of water management of the riverbed; and (c) the rehabilitation of the recess in the right bank. In this specific situation, the comprehensive research and moving of the logboat, which was recognized as the only acceptable solution for its permanent preservation, was both in the public interest of protecting the cultural heritage and in the interest of protecting people and property.

In deciding between the possibility of moving the vessel to a safer place in the Ljubljana riverbed and the possibility of lifting, conserving and presenting the logboat in the purpose-designed Centre for the Promotion of Natural and Cultural Heritage in Vrhnika, the uncertainty in relation to the (in)stability of the secondary place of deposition in the riverbed and, most of all, the conclusion that the realisation of the second option would present an important contribution to improving heritage accessibility for all social groups and thus developing public awareness of the significance of archaeological remains, which is in accordance with the recommendations of the Manual on the Rules Concerning Activities Directed at Underwater Cultural Heritage from the Annex to the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, finally prevailed.

The evaluation of the cultural protection issue of protecting and preserving the logboat and the decision for its comprehensive research and lift within the framework of the Ljubljana River Experience and Exhibition Site project was followed by the creation of the research project plan in accordance with the second chapter of the Annex to the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, the selection of a qualified contractor and the acquisition of relevant consents and permits. Commissioned by the MGML as the competent project partner, responsible

for the professional coordination of archaeological and conservation-preservation interventions, and in accordance with the Cultural Protection Consent for Research and Removal of Archaeological Remains, the underwater excavation and documentation of the vessel was carried out by the Institute for Underwater Archaeology in cooperation with the International Centre for Underwater Archaeology from Zadar – UNESCO Category II Centre. After the execution of extensive preparation work, the remains of the logboat were lifted from the riverbed and transported to the conservation workshop of the Restoration Centre of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia (ZVKDS RC).

Please describe briefly the management plan designed for the site:

The Archaeological site is designated as a monument of national importance under the authority of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia.

The Museum and Galleries of Ljubljana, together with the Restoration Centre of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia and the Biotechnical Faculty of the University of Ljubljana, carry out regular monitoring and analyses of water and sediment at the in situ location of the Roman ship in Verd near Vrhnika and manages the repository for waterlogged wood in the direct vicinity of the monument.

The exhibition area is managed by the local community in cooperation with the Museum and Galleries of Ljubljana. Programmes, which include workshops and events for different target audiences, are organised at the exhibition area, in public areas, schools and at the locations of the monument itself. Active involvement of the public, cooperation of the public and the non-government sector, and programme integration in the wider region are of the utmost importance.

The preparation of new projects is carried out as part of the macroregional EU strategies in cooperation with national and local authorities and with the cooperation of scientific, cultural and development institutions.

Have local, national and international stakeholders been involved in the process of identifying the Best Practices example? If so, please list them.

Municipality of Vrhnika
Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia
Ministry of Culture of Republic of Slovenia
Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy of Republic of Slovenia
Norwegian Financial Mechanism
International Centre for Underwater Archaeology in Zadar - ICUA (UNESCO Category II Centre)

Bibliography

Andrej GASPARI, Archaeology of the Ljubljanica River (Slovenia): early underwater investigations and some current issues. – *The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 32.1, 2003, pp. 42–52.

Andrej GASPARI, Zgodovinski pregled in perspektiva podvodnega arheološkega raziskovanja v Sloveniji (Summary. Underwater archaeological investigation in Slovenia, Historical overview and perspectives). – In: Andrej Gaspari, Miran Erič (Ed.), *Potopljena preteklost. Arheologija vodnih okolij in raziskovanje podvodne kulturne dediščine v Sloveniji* (Zbornik ob 128-letnici Dežmanovih raziskav Ljubljanice na Vrhniki (1884–2012)), Radovljica : Didakta, 2012, pp. 13–72.

Andrej GASPARI et al. 2017, *Deblak s konca 2. stoletja pr. n. št. iz Ljubljanice na Vrhniki. Študija o ladjah in čolnih predrimskega in rimskega Navporta z orisom plovbe na Ljubljanskem barju med prazgodovino in novim vekom/The Late 2nd century BC Logboat from the Ljubljanica River at Vrhnika. Study on the Ships and Boats of Preroman and Roman Nauportus with the Outline of the Navigation on the Ljubljana Marshes between Prehistory and the Early Modern Period.* – Ljubljana : Ljubljana University Press, Faculty of Arts and Museum and Galleries of Ljubljana, 2017.

Jelka PIRKOVIČ, Andrej GASPARI, The Ljubljanica river phenomenon and its Protection. – In: Fabio Maniscalco (Ed.), Tutela, conservazione e valorizzazione del patrimonio culturale subacqueo (Mediterraneum 4), Napoli : Massa Editore, 2004, pp. 253–260.

Peter TURK, Janka ISTENIČ, Timotej KNIFIC and Tomaž NABERGOJ (Ed.), *Ljubljanica – a River and its Past.* – Ljubljana : National museum of Slovenia, 2009.



The centre of Vrhnika with Stara pošta and the Ljubljanica River in the area of the logboat's site. View towards the south (photo by: D. Badovinac)



2nd century BC logboat. David Badovinac documenting the details of the bow section (photo by: A. Hodalič)



Lift of the logboat's bow section (photo by: J. Gasparič)



The future site of the logboat - the Ljubljanica River Experience and Exhibition Site (photo by J. Babnik; archives of MGML)



Promotion of the exhibition (photo by J. Lampe; Archives of the MGML)



Accompanying re-enactment event (Archives of Skupina Stik)

Please attach documents giving evidence for the information provided and any other documents you may consider relevant

The forms are to be submitted in English or in French, electronically or in hard copy. They are to be signed and sent to the following address:

UNESCO

Secretariat of the Convention on the Protection for the Underwater Cultural Heritage

7, place de Fontenoy, 75007 Paris, France

Tél. : + 33 (0) 145684406

Fax : + 33 (0) 145685596

E-mail : u.querin@unesco.org

Stamp:

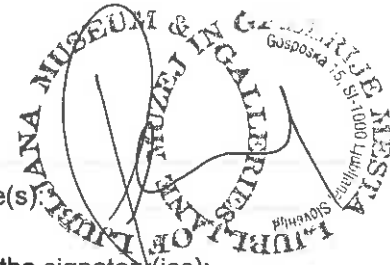
Signature(s):

Name of the signatory(ies):

Blaž Peršin, director

Museum and Galleries of Ljubljana

Date of the Submission: 30. 5. 2017



ANNEX 2- Logo Proposal

